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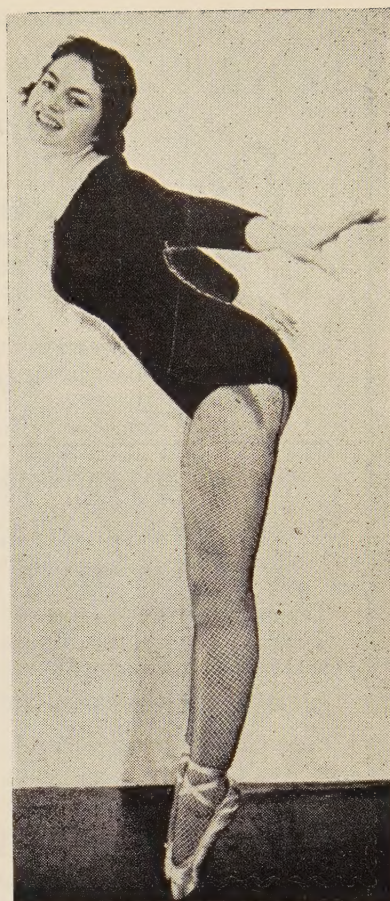
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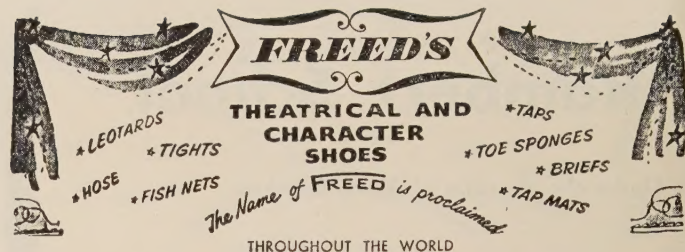
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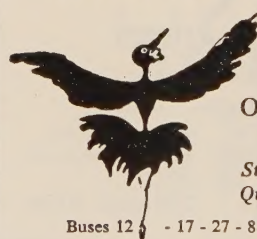
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DANCE AND DANCERS

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS Associate Editor: CLIVE BARNES

Assistant Editor: E. C. MASON

WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

THE SCENE CHANGES

IN 1921, Diaghilev put on the Tchaikovsky-Petipa *The Sleeping Princess* at the Alhambra Theatre in London. It amounted to one of the most remarkable displays of classical dancing — ballerinas even dancing what we think of as soloist rôles — that this century is likely to witness. It was designed with incredible taste and magnificence by Léon Bakst and it gave London its first opportunity of seeing and hearing this undoubted glory of Russian classical ballet in full. Those who saw this production look back on it as being the peak of their ballet-going. Yet in spite of all this the production flopped and a great deal of money was lost by everyone concerned. For too long, Diaghilev had conditioned the audience for shorter one-act works and the immense length of "La Belle" proved overpowering and slightly old-fashioned to the public of the early 'twenties.

Now, nearly forty years later, we have just the reverse happening, because recent box-office research at Covent Garden has revealed that during the present season of Royal Ballet the full-length works have sold out for the entire season and that the programmes of one-act works have not, and are, in the main, sparsely attended.

It is not that there is anything against full-evening works and ballets such as *Le Lac des Cygnes* or *The Sleeping Beauty*. Please don't get that idea for one moment. These are great classics and are the very bed-rock of all theatrical dancing, for not only are they essential for any ballet company to perform but they are the soundest foundation upon which an audience can build its appreciation of the art. That new full-length works such as Ashton's *Ondine*, with its great rôle for Margot Fonteyn, is enjoying such a success with the public is highly gratifying, as it is an occasion of the utmost importance to the history of British ballet. But if the public stays away from the shorter work where then does the future lie?

It is only in the short ballets that the choreographer can try his paces and the future stars try theirs. Economically it is impossible to attempt any sort of experimentation in full-evening works, so it means that we shall become bogged down by monumental narrative epics cut to the cloth of box-office dictates. It also means that, owing to the colossal cost of full-length works, we shall only see a new creation once every few years. In fact it opens up a dim and dreary prospect which bears certain resemblances to the state of affairs in St. Petersburg at the end of the last century and away from which Diaghilev and his company were forced to flee. So if you are one for making New Year resolutions, then make one and promise to take more friends with you to support some of the less popular works and also go to see the smaller, more experimental companies. I can think of no better resolution you could make for 1959.

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In Birthday Offering

Photo: Houston Rogers

NADIA NERINA

NADIA NERINA could perhaps be called a problem ballerina. Technically she is very probably the most gifted dancer appearing today on our side of the Iron Curtain, and she can have few equals even in Russia. Most dancers, however gifted technically, possess one or perhaps two attributes that could truly be called outstanding. But Nerina has the lot! She is a supremely wonderful machine for dancing. She is not yet, in our opinion, a great ballerina. Between the good dancer and the great there lies an intangible, but unmistakable barrier. Two dancers — Markova and Fonteyn — in British ballet history have broken through this barrier, other dancers — notably Elvin and Grey — have come up to it and then, for a variety of reasons, shied away. Nerina, 31 years old and consequently at what would normally be the beginning of the peak years of her career, looks as though she will be the next dancer to attempt a break-through.

Her career so far has been markedly less promising than Svetlana Beriosova's, a younger contender for ballet's final honours who is perhaps ultimately the better bet and is clearly following more closely the pattern originally set by Fonteyn. While Nerina's future is perhaps less predictable, she could still spring a whale-sized surprise on all those people who have written her off as a lady of little importance.

Her career since she left her native South Africa and joined the Royal Ballet in 1946 has been as effortless in its rise to the top as is her dancing. Almost from the beginning she has proved a better executant than interpreter, and her powers of execution have steadily increased until now, when she is able to give stunning performances in such works as *Ballet Imperial*. Yet too often her portrayals have lacked life and depth. This present citation as "Dancer of the Year" has been awarded for just three performances at the end of 1958 — *Giselle* at Covent Garden and on TV, and *Mam'zelle Angot*. In these Nerina appeared to show a new spirit in her dancing — as though a sleeping beauty had started to awake. And if the interpretive powers of this remarkable dancer ever catch up with her thrilling technique, she will have few peers.



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Credits and Discredits of 1958

NEW YEAR'S HONOURS TO: Frederick Ashton for his distinguished three-act ballet, *Ondine*, which gives Margot Fonteyn her greatest created rôle to date; Margot Fonteyn for grasping the *Ondine* rôle's opportunities with both hands and making the rôle as much personal to herself as Galina Ulanova has made that of Juliet in the Bolshoi *Romeo and Juliet*; Dame Ninette de Valois for her untiring efforts in Australia at putting her smaller Royal Ballet company over to the audience there; Alicia Markova for being awarded a C.B.E. in last New Year's honours and for continuing to bring her great art unimpaired to peoples across the globe; Yvette Chauviré for her wonderful performances during her guest appearances with the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden; Beryl Grey for being the first British ballerina to appear in Soviet Russia and for being able to write a book about it all; Margaret Dale for the high standard of her TV productions and for her continued efforts to bring the best possible artists to the BBC screen; Granada TV for making every effort to popularise ballet on the commercial TV screen; all companies and people who went out of their way to help American Ballet Theatre after it had lost its scenery, costumes and effects in a fire during its European tour; London's Festival Ballet for touring Israel and for successfully taking British ballet across Europe; the Royal Ballet in Australia, who have managed to live down the stigma that they were not the company from Covent Garden and to Svetlana Beriosova and Bryan Ashbridge who were the two guest artists most responsible for altering the Australians' opinion, a fact we can well believe after seeing both of them in *Le Lac des Cygnes* on December 4; Kenneth MacMillan, who has given the British and Americans three notable creations and for his gift of *Laidrette* to Ballet Rambert; Ballet Rambert for continuing to bring a high artistic policy to the British public even if that public does not always respond as it should; John Taras for having installed new life and discipline into the International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas; Antonio for having filled the London Coliseum during his four-week season.

TO HONOUR TO: Those scratch orchestras who have with their scratching throughout the year caused audiences almost to fill their ears with cotton wool (the poor dancers who are bound to listen to them have not been in the lucky position of the audience); all audiences who are too lazy or unimaginative to investigate further than the Royal Opera House and Festival Hall; ballet critics who hide their ignorance in a welter of meaningless phrases and who think that the only clever criticism is disparagement; dancers who do not seriously consider any art or artist outside the very limited confines of their own companies; those responsible for the ballet publicity during the Brussels Exhibition, which meant that the greatest collection of dancers in our time appeared unheralded and unsung.

PLEASE BE ADULT: The Paris Opéra whose noble history has been marred by strikes and various internal disagreements of late; the Royal Danish Ballet, who are still using the eight-year-old under row as an excuse for internal strife; the Royal Ballet, who have never forgiven us for pointing out the confusion existing in the minds of the paying public concerning the labelling of the two companies.

NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT: The musical accompaniment to nearly all ballet companies everywhere; the development of ballet design in Britain (our two best designers are still Greek and Australian); the attitude towards the story of almost any work created in Britain where it is still the amateurish efforts of choreographers that supply the "books" of most ballets; the general approach to mime in British ballets from every member of the company, not just from the few older and more mature artists still allowed to appear on British stages.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR: No contest.

PERFORMANCES OF THE YEAR: Fonteyn and Grant in *Ondine*; Yvette Chauviré in *Giselle* and *The Sleeping Beauty* at Covent Garden; Alicia Markova in *Giselle* and in her *pas de deux* from the opera *William Tell*; Nina Vyroubova in *Les Éphrudes*, Rosella Hightower in *Piège de Lumière* and Serge Golovine in *L'Amour et son Destin*, and all three of them in the *Quinta Pas de Trois*; Svetlana Beriosova in *Rinaldo* and *Armida* and *Giselle*; John Gilpin and Anita Landa in *Witch Boy*; Nadia Terina and Nicolai Fadeychev in the TV *Giselle*; Beryl Goldwyn and Milorad Miskovitch in the Rambert *Giselle*; the whole of Royal Ballet (II) in *The Burrow*; Antoinette Sibley in the *Bluebird* *de deux*.



HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR: Margot Fonteyn's dancing in Ashton's *Ondine*, which, in the last months of 1958, turned a not very exciting year into one which at least was notable for a very great created rôle by a very great ballerina. Photo: Roger Wood.

NEW CHOREOGRAPHY WE ARE GLAD TO SEE: Frederick Ashton's *Ondine*; Kenneth MacMillan's *Agon* and *The Burrow*; Jack Carter's *Witch Boy*; Norman Morrice's *Two Brothers*; Milko Sparemblek's *Quatuor*; Clover Roope's *Le Farceur*; Maurice Béjart's *Juliette*; Walter Gore's *The Night and Silence*.

NEW CHOREOGRAPHY WE ARE NOT GLAD TO SEE: *Le Rendezvous Manqué* (an unhappy combination of various talents all of whom can do much better); John Cranko's *The Angels*; James Starbuck's *Le Mal du Siècle*; Serge Lifar's *L'Amour et son Destin*.

REVIVALS WE WELCOME: Andrée Howard's *La Fête Étrange*; John Cranko's *Harlequin in April*; Kenneth MacMillan's *Danses Concertantes*.

REVIVALS WE WOULD WELCOME: Leonide Massine's *Pulcinella*; Nijinska's *Les Noces* and *Les Biches* (if only for the Poulenc score); Balanchine's *Le Fils Prodigue*, *Cotillon* and *The Triumph of Neptune* (witty English subject and a memorial to Lord Berners); Ashton's *Les Rendezvous*, *A Wedding Bouquet*, *Horoscope* and *The Wise Virgins*; Howard's *The Sailor's Return* and *Mermaid*; any of the better Tudor ballets for the Royal Ballet's repertory.

COME BACK SOON: The New York City Ballet; The Bolshoi Ballet; American Ballet Theatre; the Royal Danish Ballet; Martha Graham; José Limón; Pilar Lopez.

COME HERE SOON: The Stanislavsky Ballet from Moscow; Jerome Robbins' Ballets: U.S.A.; Maurice Béjart's Ballet Théâtre de Paris.

DON'T COME BACK SOON: A company calling itself Polish Ballet at the Sadler's Wells Theatre who did great harm to the appreciation of ballet from their own country.

RETURNS OF THE YEAR (happy or otherwise according to how you feel): Robert Helpmann as a dancer in his *Hamlet* and

Miracle in the Gorbals and in *The Rake's Progress* and *Coppélia*; Mona Inglesby in the *Rose Adagio* from *The Sleeping Beauty* at the R.A.D. Matinee; Beryl Goldwyn and Mary Munro to Ballet Rambert; Leonide Massine as the Peruvian in *Gaieté Parisienne*.

WELCOME NEWCOMER: Sunday Ballet Club.

IMPORTANT DANCE CENTRES OFF THE MORE BEATEN TRACK: Monte Carlo which continues with the tradition started by Diaghilev in presenting two important ballet seasons, at Christmas and Easter, annually; Nervi, near Genoa, which presents an international festival of growing importance; Spoleto, in Italy, which gave its Festival of Two Worlds and started off the Robbins' Ballets; U.S.A. in a highly successful international career; Bath, which proved that it could become a most important centre of British culture.

MYSTERIES OF THE YEAR: The financial miscalculation of the cost of putting on twelve creations for the Edinburgh Festival which led, after a most promising start and favourable notices, to anger and disgruntlement on the part of all those connected with it; who is to be Dame Ninette de Valois' successor as Director of the Royal Ballet when she decides to retire (which every one of us hopes she will not); the reasons for the cost of seats being raised in 1959 at the Royal Opera House at a time when the prices of most commodities are going down; the hardy annual mystery of how much of the State grant is allotted to opera and how much to ballet at Covent Garden; who was responsible for the idiotic planning and lack of co-ordination which meant that during the month of September four major companies were playing in London at the same time and which resulted in all of them doing bad business; why has Peter Daubeny forsaken ballet, because if he can present the Moscow Arts Theatre he must have recovered his health sufficiently to present dance programmes.

THE MOST IMPROVED DANCERS OF THE YEAR: In the Royal Ballet (I): Nadia Nerina, Brian Shaw, Anya Linden, Merle Park, Bryan Ashbridge, Gary Burne, Desmond Doyle, Ronald Hynd, Shirley Grahame, Deirdre Dixon, Derek Rencher, John Sale, Graham Usher, Antoinette Sibley, Benjamin Stevens, William Wilson.

In Royal Ballet (II): Patricia Cox, Margaret Lee, Donald MacLeary, Lynn Seymour, Noreen Sopwith, Johaar Mosaval, Gordon Aitken, Christopher Gable.

In London's Festival Ballet: Jeannette Minty, Estella Nova, Dianne Richards, Diane Westerman, Jean-Pierre Alban, Louis Godfrey, Deirdre O'Conaire, Selena Wylie, Donald McAlpine, Peter Brownlee, Max Natiez.

In Ballet Rambert: Lucette Aldous, Gillian Martlew, Norman Morrice.

HIGHLIGHTS NEW AND OLD: Left, John Gilpin and Anita Landa of London's Festival Ballet in Mike Davis's picture of Jack Carter's *The Witch Boy*. Right, Rosella Hightower of the International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas repeated her magnificent performance as the Queen of the Morphides in John Taras's *Piège de Lumière*. Her picture is by Lipnitzki.

In Western Theatre Ballet: Anne Hyde, Brenda Last, Hazel Merry, Laverne Meyer, Erling Sunde.

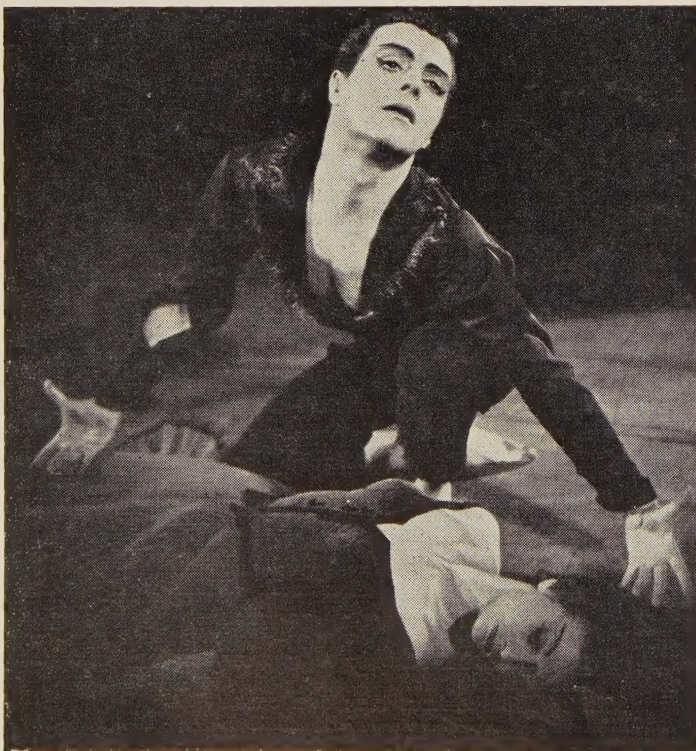
DESIGNS WE ARE GLAD TO SEE: Nicholas Georgiadis's for *Agon* and *The Burrow*; André Levasseur's for *Romeo and Juliet*; Lila de Nobili's for *Ondine*, especially for the 2nd scene of the 1st Act; Pierre Clayette's for Béjart's *Juliette*; Bernard Buffet's for *Le Rendez-vous Manqué* (though only as they were shown in Monte Carlo, certainly not as they appeared in London); André Derain's for *Mam'zelle Angot*, which provides the only reason for this work's survival.

THESE VISITORS WERE WELCOME: Milorad Miskovitch's Ballets de Paris 1958; Nina Vyroubova and Serge Golovine of the International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas; Antonio and his cousin, Paco Ruiz; Yvette Chauviré; Marcel Marceau and his mime Company; Nicolai Fadeychev as Albrecht in *Giselle* on TV; Léon Woizikowski as temporary ballet master of London's Festival Ballet.

BALLET RECORDS OF THE YEAR: The full-length *Giselle* conducted by the Bolshoi's Yuri Fayer; *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker* conducted by Efrem Kurtz.

BALLET BOOKS OF THE YEAR: In a year cluttered with ballet books, not one really stands out or has made any notable contribution to ballet literature. Apart from Ivor Guest's *Adeline Genée* it is doubtful whether any one of 1958's books could be removed from our shelves and we should notice that it had been taken — or cause us to shed a tear when we found that it had.

OUR HOPES FOR 1959: That *The Sleeping Beauty* at Covent Garden will be entirely re-designed and re-produced; that London's Festival Ballet will be able to mount a three-act work which will make an important contribution to ballet history; that Ballet Rambert will have a highly successful American tour and that the Americans will recognise the company's qualities and thus inspire vast British audiences to do the same; that Kenneth MacMillan will be given a chance to mount a two or three-act ballet at Covent Garden; that a dance teacher will arise in Britain to inspire the dancers in the same way that Vera Volkova once did; that a new generation of British designers will arise and excite us as much as French ones have in the past; that Sunday Ballet Club discovers at least three new and important choreographers; that *Dance and Dancers*, in the year that completes its first decade, will continue to be respected, loathed, loved, thrown across the room, used for wrapping up the fish, glanced at, read from cover to cover, paid heed to, but, principally, *bought* by you.



ONDINE

(Part Two — MUSIC and DECOR)

First given by the Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on October 27, 1958. Scenario freely adapted by Frederick Ashton from the story by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué. Choreography by Frederick Ashton. Music by Hans Werner Henze. Scenery and costumes by Lila de Nobili. Lighting by Michael Worthen.

Cast

Ondine MARGOT FONTEYN
 Sulemon MICHAEL SOMES
 Arta JULIA FARRON
 Arrenio, lord of the Mediterranean Sea ... ALEXANDER GRANT
 Hermit LESLIE EDWARDS
 Grand Pas Classique (in Act 3) ROSEMARY LINDSAY,
 ANNETTE PAGE, RONALD HYND, DESMOND DOYLE
 and Corps de Ballet
 Divertissement (in Act 3) MARYON LANE, MERLE PARK,
 DOREEN WELLS, BRIAN SHAW, PETER CLEGG,
 PIRMIN TRECU and Corps de Ballet

MUSIC

FURTHER hearings of *Ondine* since the first night have strengthened my conviction that the music by Hans Werner Henze is the least rewarding or satisfying feature of the ballet. The reasons for this are not so far to seek as you might think. Henze is clearly a fluent note-spinner; no composer could fill the large canvas demanded by a three-act ballet without a considerable resourcefulness of technique. He does not lack invention, even though so much seems to have been borrowed from models like Stravinsky and Prokofiev. Henze's chief weakness in this instance is the absence of imagination in the development of his ideas and, above all, of a coherent individual style to give the music personality.

The composer, who at the age of 32 already has nine ballets, three operas, three symphonies and a number of other orchestral works to his name, tailored his music to Frederick Ashton's specification. More than a year ago Henze told me himself that Ashton gave me the speed and timing of each episode, often the character of the music and even the orchestration in some cases. Petipa and Tchaikovsky are the best of all precedents for such a method of collaboration. Yet it does not seem that Henze fully grasped the kind of ballet that Ashton was creating.

His method in composing the score suggests a cross between a magpie and a grasshopper. The magpie in him raided the treasuries of any number of composers, from Schumann and Brahms to the Prokofiev and Stravinsky already mentioned. Musical detectives can have a whale of a time spotting the antecedents for this theme that in *Ondine*, but no prizes are offered: the game is too easy. If Henze had conceived more of a pastiche he might have got away with it. Benjamin Britten steeped himself in Tchaikovsky before composing *The Prince of the Pagodas*, but what he absorbed touched off his own creative imagination. Henze merely held Dapertout's mirror up to his models and caught their reflections.

When the magpie had finished the grasshopper took over, nipping nimbly but automatically from one musical style to another. Fastened on a pseudo-romanticism for much of the first act, tinselled it with

FIRST VIEW OF
ONDINE: Lila de
 Nobili's design for the
 first sight of Ondine
 when she appears in
 a waterfall at the
 beginning of Act 1,
 Scene 1.

cabaret trappings for the ensemble of Sprites and Nymphs, evoked a striking impressionist tone-picture for the start of Act II (by far the most successful part of the score), relapsed into some coldly businesslike counterpoint here and there, dabbled in more impressionism for Ondine's wonderful dance on the waves in the last act, tried bending a sombre Teutonic chorale to the first of the *divertissements*, flirted with jazz and *bal musette* in the second and contrived a finale of such blameless anonymity that not a note of it remains in my mind.

If Henze had woven into these disparate facets the thread of a strong individual character, his shortcomings might not have been so serious. It would still not have excused him, however, from failing to grasp the one significant and unifying stylistic feature of *Ondine*: Ashton's choreographic rhapsody on the element of water. In the history of music strangely few composers have succeeded in transmuting the spirit of water into sound. Only Wagner in *The Flying Dutchman*, Debussy's *La Mer* and the sea interludes from Britten's *Peter Grimes* spring immediately to mind. To succeed requires rather more than harp *glissandi*, shimmering strings and a Pandora's box of percussion effects such as Henze calls to his aid in *Ondine*.

To my mind all the musical weaknesses and miscalculations of the ballet stem from the composer's failure to let this basic feature fertilise his creative imagination. Had he done so, he might have extended the effectiveness of his second-act opening and avoided the incongruities of style, of orchestral texture, even of rhythm (in the processional and ensemble of the last act, for instance) that abound. As it is, except for very few moments, music and dancing are imposed on one another instead of growing



organically out of a single stylistic conception. The result, I fear, will be that one will eventually throttle the other, and the Lord of the Sea will claim another victim. Of the performance there is little to say except that Henze showed himself an adept conductor, and persuaded the orchestra to play as if they were enjoying themselves.

Noël Goodwin

DECOR

"THIS is not your evening is it?" exclaimed the anonymous old lady prodding me in the back as is her wont. For years she has been doing this, then having delivered her volley she has a habit of vanishing into the crowd nodding and smiling to herself at her daring. For her I have a great affection. "Two months ago you rather went overboard about those extraordinary designs of Mr. Georgiadis for *Agon* didn't you," she went on, "but these *Ondine* designs are not at all your sort of thing."

"Madam, I beg to differ. This is very much my sort of thing and in fact I once designed a ballet with rocks and waterfalls myself — it was very Romantic. But even if it were not the school I admired most, I should always praise any school of designing provided it was good of its kind and fitted to the occasion. I only abhor lack of suitability, talent and taste. Otherwise my feelings know no boundaries." She said nothing but did her usual vanishing act nodding in disbelief.

But, as I have already said before in these columns, the secret of successful ballet design lies in the commissioning of the artist. Ballet being the composite art that it is, this fact is possibly more vital than in



THE SHIP IN PORT AND AT SEA: Two designs by Lila de Nobili for the second act. The picture on the left shows the port with the sailors and passengers embarking. On the right is the ship at sea with the storm brewing before the ship is finally wrecked. The whole of the act was seen through an oval proscenium which gave the impression of it being looked at through a telescope.

any other branch of the theatre. In this respect Ashton set himself a bit of a poser — his scenario was based on a typical German fairy tale of the last century, the score was by a typical German composer of today. How to bridge the gap? That is the question. The obvious answer would have been to commission Pavel Tchelitchev who created some never-to-be-forgotten designs for the *Ondine* of Giradoux. But Tchelitchev, alas, is dead and the present world knows not his like. I can think of few designers today more suited to the task than the Italian Lila de Nobili. She is a true Romantic yet she gives her work in the theatre a modern twist which becomes

something personal to herself and never a pastiche.

Just after the war when those glossy magazines which only the French can produce, were appearing to brighten up our taste-starved lives, I remember that several of them were reproducing enchanting little fantasies signed by what was then a new name to me — "Nobili". White-faced cherubic figures peeped out from gas-lit scenes whose predominating colour was sepia. It seemed that the designer had derived certain inspiration from Bérard who, in his turn must from time to time have considered the work of Tchelitchev. So in a sense Lila de Nobili is in the tradition of the designer I would have chosen

in the first place — and I have a feeling that Ashton also would have — were Tchelitchev still alive.

Nobili is the mistress of the "no colour" school of designing and I have yet to see any work of hers in the theatre that was not in the full range of monotonous. Yet what she can do with blacks, browns and whites is quite amazing. What uses she can make of textures is even more masterly. The whole way through *Ondine* I could not help thinking how unbelievably banal many of the scenes would have been in the hands of most designers. That castle, for instance, in the opening scene could so easily have looked like an amateur production of *Yeoman of the Guard*. That it didn't was mainly due to the fact that the whole setting was painted on gauze and, like most of the other sets, painted by the artist herself. The castle walls thus have a soft warm glow which dispels any of the heaviness attendant on most scenes of a similar nature. The dripping grotto from which *Ondine* first emerges is a charming creation though I noticed that the problem, which I also once faced in *Selina*, of how to get supernatural creatures out of waterfalls was not even here completely solved.

It is with the second scene in the first act that Nobili really comes into her own. This Mysterious Forest with its mountainous rocks and dripping cascades, seen through a tunnel of forest trees is in the grand old tradition of spectacular ballet. It is misty as from the rising damp or the spray of a hundred waterfalls and the outlines are undetermined. Figures appear vaguely on different levels and even when they arrive on *terra firma* it is not always possible to see just how they materialise. The sensitive lighting of Michael Northen did a great deal here to heighten the illusion. Altogether this setting was a lovely creation.

Scenery and effects were — or should have been — the principal attraction of the second act on board ship which moves from a port to the open sea and becomes involved in a storm and wreck. That this act did not really come off was due, I'm afraid, to the inability of Covent Garden to work real stage magic. The opening is good, very good, and the use of a permanent front

REALISATION OF THE PORT: *Ondine* and Palemon (Fonteyn and Sones) arrive on board preparatory to the sea trip. The photograph gives some idea of how Lila de Nobili's design, shown above, was realised. Photo: Roger Wood.



auze gives the portside scene the look of a colour supplement in a Christmas number of the *Illustrated London News* in the days before colour printing had got so hard and lossy. Its very softness is endearing and has all the mellow glow of summer mornings. With the ship moving away from the quay, the trouble starts — both in the action and in the stage mechanics. One starts to wonder why, since this is before the days of steam, the ship ever moves at all because the sails never fill with breeze — they just hang there looking rather limp and forlorn. Then the backcloth moves up and down to suggest a roll which is not synchronised by the heaving of the crew and passengers. However, this is not too serious until the ship gets into a storm for then I feel it would pitch and toss also. This could easily have been achieved by having one of the sea ground-rows on a swivel. But no, the storm got wilder and this was only suggested rather hysterically by off-stage ondines waving bits of chiffon in an attempt at simulating waves — the horizon, I may say, kept the same steady roll of calmer waters. Surely the first thing a crew would do in a sudden gale would be to take down all sail — but not this one. Finally the ship is wrecked and the masts undulate like daffodils in a Spring zephyr. Admittedly they are designed to crash down but their descent is most sluggardly. The decks become awash with dry-ice in an attempt at roaring breakers but the effect promotes no feeling other than — dry-ice alone. All very disappointing and I could not help feeling all the time how exciting and stimulating it all would have been in Moscow or Copenhagen. The stage staff at Covent Garden need to study the remarkable effects which were achieved as far back as the Renaissance stage and which continued until the First World War shattered our understanding of theatre magic. If you're making an honest attempt at old-fashioned fairy tales, then you should go the whole hog and reproduce the effects which once were the glory of the theatres. A real sea voyage would, in this case, do nobody any harm — even a short one, say, across the Irish Channel — just to get aimmer of understanding as to how the sea and those upon it behave when the wind gets a little out of hand. Actually no blame in this case can be attached to Lila de Nobili who designed a very plausible ship and a very plausible and turbulent seascape — her black waters looked most uninviting.

The last act in Palemon's castle looked rather too symmetrical on first viewing with its wide expanse of sea seen through a gothic arch. But there is a reason for this because a little later we see a vision of Ondine floating, dipping and diving through the waves. As this is choreographically a moment of great beauty it is not unnatural that more interesting design has to be sacrificed to it. As it is, the last act makes an unobtrusive background for this episode and for the *Grand Pas Classique* and Diverissement which follow. The final apotheosis in the grotto whence Ondine bears the lifeless body of Palemon, not clearly shown on the first night, is charming with its stalactites after giving way to a milky way of stars.

For her costumes, Lila de Nobili has gone to the Directoire period and a welcome change from Victorian Romantic evocations she makes. When I say that Nobili uses no colour, I should have said that she leaves the impression of no colour, because touches of colour other than blacks and browns she occasionally does achieve. For instance, some of the huntsmen in the opening moments are yellow-coated and Palemon



DANCE BEFORE DEATH: Palemon (Somes) and Ondine (Fonteyn) above in the pas de deux in the last act when she appears to him during the celebrations after his marriage to Berta. Palemon now realises that he loves only Ondine and her kiss means his death. Previous to this, the wedding guests had entertained the married couple and Annette Page and Rosemary Lindsay are seen below leading the Grand Pas Classique while Palemon and Berta watch from the left.

Photos: Roger Wood.





DESIGN FOR A BANQUET: Lila de Nobili's design for the wedding scene in the last act. In the niche on the right is seen a vision of Ondine which has appeared in Berta's portrait, a wedding present from her to Palemon. In the actual production the table on the left was replaced by two thrones for the married couple and the chaise longue was not used. At one moment in this scene a vision of Ondine appears in the sea which can be seen through the window.

wears a turquoise sash to relieve the sombre black of his costume. Julia Farron, as Berta, also wears turquoise tights though somehow I am not happy about the way they contrast with her black riding habit as they bring her legs into too great prominence and give her an air of vulgarity. The ondines are all very Directoire — bosoms high and body revealing — and their skirts of varying lengths glitter with dew drops and flutter like a mist. The male Ondines were less happy — scaly, silvery baroque creatures with coal-scuttle hats. Somehow male dancers of today never look as if they belong in such costumes and one rather wonders if men in the time of Louis XIV looked any more as if they belonged, though possibly they did because then they were nearer to the court dress of the time. Alexander Grant, as Tirrenio, lord of the sea, wears a glistening unripened tobacco creation but his head-dress is rather too heavy. He also sports a flimsy cloak which furls and flutters around him whenever he moves which is most of the time. In the last act he has an even more elaborate cloak which billows around like a very segment of the sea itself — most effective particularly when he exits out of sight down some steps.

In the second act the colours for the people of the port who are left ashore are muted and undetermined and here, possibly, a little heightening of colour might have helped. However, they and the white-clad sailors were toned into the patina of

the whole scene and their quietness particularly suited the music at this point which was deliberately played down to give the sense of tranquillity before the ensuing storm. The only bright colour in the whole scene was a piece of red material which covered a trunk for most of the scene but which Berta used as a cloak later when fleeing from the storm.

If you consider gold and silver to be colours then the beginning of the last act was distinctly colourful for the dancers of the *Grand Pas Classique* were all a-glitter. In fact their shimmering gold and silver costumes start to cloy after the first impact, though individually they are excellently conceived. I particularly liked the two turbaned principals. If people should wonder why the male dancers were wearing trunks and hose more suited to Elizabethan England then they should make a study of the many prints and engravings of elaborate court balls during the Directory and they will find that this kind of costume was perfectly in keeping. Actually they are of exquisite design, as also are the attendant guests in black with elaborate embroidery round the edges of their dresses and trains.

In contrast, the *Commedia dell'Arte* costumes for the *Divertissement* which follows look distinctly drab. I believe that the original idea was for these performers to be ondines and sea sprites in disguise; after they had finished their dances they were to cast off their strolling player dress and reveal themselves in their true light.

However this idea was not found practical for dancing but the temporary costumes remained and unfortunately they have a rather temporary appearance. The *corps* wear grey chiffon baggy costumes closely based on the traditional Pulcinello — the only colour being a small flame-coloured heart in the front of each. The three principal girls have rather delightful "folly" costumes with high-waisted black velvet bodices. Brian Shaw, as the principal male dancer, wears flame all-over tights while his two supporting males wear the same coloured tights and white Romantic Harlequin blouses — some of the fish-scales from the original idea remain on their thighs. Taken out of their context these costumes look drabber still, as was proved when the *Divertissement* was given for the recent R.A.D. matinee. If, as seems highly probable, the *Divertissement* is to be given by itself on occasion, it would seem that a bit of redesigning here is essential.

Unlike in most ballets mainly built around a great ballerina, the three costumes for Fonteyn do not vary noticeably from her surrounding ondines. In the first act she wears a lighter colour. In the second act, I felt, she still remained too much "ondine" and had never assumed any kind of human apparel. The fault here I think was Nobili's. In the last act — with white all-over tights showing through a seaweed gauze covering and, in the early parts of the scene, cloak — she appeared to be nude. The effect was coldly seductive and he



GOLD AND SILVER DANCES: Members of the Grand Pas Classique at the end of the elaborate divertissement in the last act. The costumes for the principal girls and the men are all in rich gold while the six girls in the first row are all dressed in silver.

Photo: Roger Wood.

lovely line was well revealed.

It could be said that there is little breathtaking excitement in Nobili's designing for this ballet. On the other hand, the ballet has few such moments and I feel that her designs perfectly match-up to the even flow and the quietness of the work as a whole.

There is an overriding impression left of immaculate taste and understanding. Would that one could say the same thing for all who design for three-act ballets. Michael Northern's lighting was equally sensitive, so sensitive that I tremble to think what may happen to it when the work is revived after

a gap or how it will fare when the company next goes to America. **Peter Williams**

LAST MONTH: The full story of Ondine together with Clive Barnes' review of the production, choreography and the dancing appeared in the last issue, December, 1958.

THE TWO LOVES OF PALEMON: Palemon (Michael Somes) is seen on the left with his mortal love, Berta (Julia Farron), and with his supernatural love, Ondine (Fonteyn) on the right. The two Lila de Nobili costumes for Palemon and Berta are magnificent creations in grey and gold.

Photos: Roger Wood.



Whither Sunday Ballet Club?

by PETER JAY

who, until he recently had to resign owing to pressure of other work, was responsible for lighting the first two programmes of Sunday Ballet Club and the Production Manager of the third. By profession, Peter Jay is an electrical and lighting consultant.

THE Sunday Ballet Club has presented thirteen works so far at Wyndham's Theatre. Of these, two were related only marginally to the true aims of the club, and can therefore be left out of account. Of the remaining eleven, one, *Le Farceur*, by Clover Roope, achieved a genuine success, and three more, *An Affair*, by David Drew, *Voice in the Wilderness* by Norman Dixon and *Finders-Keepers* by Jacqueline Wat-cham, received qualified approval.

There have been two other ballets, *Black and White* by Meriel Evans and *The Uninvited Guest* by Ronald Yerrel, which some people, including myself, liked very much, but which failed to achieve a general success.

This is not at all a bad record for an organisation of this kind, and the club might expect to carry on as it has started, and to turn up a success every two or three productions. However, I do not think that it is as simple as this.

AIMS

The ostensible aim of the club is to provide opportunities for young and untried choreographers who might otherwise remain undiscovered, or at any rate, discovered but undeveloped. There are several kinds of people falling within this broad description. Meriel Evans and Ronald Yerrel, for instance, had appreciable previous experience: Alan Beale and Terry Gilbert had limited experience, while Clover Roope, the one success, had no experience.

First steps in choreography should ideally be taken in studio productions, in practice dress, before an invited audience.

The Sunday Ballet Club gives its performances in a West End Theatre, in costumes, often with some attempt at a setting, and before an audience which has paid fairly high prices for seats. In principle at least it would therefore prefer to use choreographers who have already had some studio experience — but on the other hand, it has been able to present only three ballets which could not have been done almost equally well under studio conditions. These ballets are *Voice in the Wilderness*, *The Uninvited Guest* and *Le Farceur*, and they have three points in common. All had casts of ten or more, all had a clearly defined plot, and all were planned to use a fair amount of scenery. At the last moment it was found impossible to provide any scenery for *Voice in the Wilderness*, but this does not affect the general principle.

It is obvious that if the club is to continue to attract an audience it must present more ballets of this kind, and yet they place a tremendous strain both on the choreographers and the club.

DANCERS

Perhaps the most inspiring feature of the productions so far has been the enthusiasm and generosity of the dancers, especially of those in the smaller and less rewarding rôles, who have given up so much of their time to attend rehearsals. Even so, those choreographers who have looked for casts of more than five or six have invariably run into trouble, since although many may be willing, not all are able to attend rehearsals at the same time. For the most part, choreographers and dancers have come from ballet companies, and rehearsals have had to be

squeezed into their already overcrowded schedules.

In these conditions it is surprising that any of the ballets has reached the stage at all, the more so that some of them have been described in the press as "well-rehearsed".

MUSIC

It is very much easier for an inexperienced choreographer to make a success of a story ballet than a plotless one. The difficulty is that a story ballet really ought to have a specially composed, or arranged, score, and this is expensive. The club has only presented one ballet with a specially composed score, which caused tremendous difficulties both in rehearsal and performance. I should myself be surprised if it will be in a hurry to tackle a special score again, unless it be for one or two pianos only.

SCENERY

Story ballets without scenery are rather rare; most are going to require some scenery, but the club has nowhere to make it or to store it, and has hitherto relied on the loan of the occasional garage. Naturally, the scenery also costs money, but it would cost less as time went on if the club had a store and could build up a stock.

However, all these difficulties can be coped with, one way or another. The really serious problem is the time scenery consumes on the day of performance. Wyndham's Theatre building is lent to the club through the generosity of Mr. Donald Albany, and the club pays only for staff, electricity and heating. The practice has been to bring all scenery and costumes into the theatre on the Friday or Saturday, but, obviously, no setting-up can start until the end of the Saturday night performance. The scenery of the current production must then be cleared away, and only after that can the club's scenery and lighting be set. During the night it can be set only provisionally; however carefully the stage has been marked out in chalk on the rehearsal room floor, one will still find, when the dancers come on the stage, that some equipment has to be moved and rehung, and all this takes a great deal of time.

I know of no other organisation that has tried to première four or five ballets in one day under these conditions. Where there is hardly any scenery, as for the second programme, things may be expected to go fairly smoothly. One ballet could be on the stage within five minutes of the preceding one having finished, and all were able to have two or three complete rehearsals in the time allotted. For the third programme the turn-around of ballets was much more lengthy. Scenery had to be struck, reset, and peered at from all angles, while for *The Uninvited Guest* the orchestra had to be settled into the pit and rehearsed. All this leaves much less time for the dancing, and, in fact, that ballet had time for only one run-through on the stage.

Apart from all these points, the use of scenery, live orchestras and so on increases the strain on those responsible for the technical and administrative aspects of the production to an appalling extent, and so the risk of breakdown is increased.

POLICY

The questions I have discussed above are

merely preliminaries. Even supposing that the club can get round all these difficulties — for instance, by presenting three simple and one complex ballet in each programme — there remains the question of how ballets are to be selected, and whether, once selected, the choreographer is to be given any guidance during rehearsals. There might also be the invidious decision as to which one out of four choreographers shall be allowed to use scenery.

The club is run by "amateurs", that is, enthusiastic people who have no experience in the world of ballet. There is also a stiffening of unpaid professionals, for instance, John Woolf, the musical director, and professionals in related fields, like Murray Arbeid, originally in charge of costumes.

When first founded the club received promises of enthusiastic support from nearly every distinguished name in ballet. These were first formed into an "advisory committee", which never, in fact, met. They were later called, more accurately, "Patrons," while a second, smaller and less awe-inspiring advisory committee was set up, which, so far as I know, has never met either.

The selection of ballets has not so far been much of a problem, as there has never been more than one ballet offered for a given performance in excess of the number which could be accommodated in the programme. Selection has therefore come down to deciding which ballet should be excluded, and this has been done largely on grounds of cost or ease of staging.

One must, however, envisage that at some time in the future eight or nine ballets might be offered for a given performance which can accommodate no more than four, and that all the ballets would cost about the same and be equally easy to stage.

At present, there is nobody in the club who is competent to make such a selection on artistic grounds alone.

ARTISTIC GUIDANCE

Guidance in rehearsal is an even more difficult matter. Some of the critics who have mentioned the point have implied that the problem of artistic direction within the club is of the same nature as in a regular ballet company, but this is far from being the case. The majority of ballets offered to the club come from young people full of one particular idea which they are most unwilling to modify. The club can give them very little help, in finding rehearsal rooms, dancers, pianos and so on, and does no more than pay for costume materials — in many cases the choreographer has had to find someone to make them. In these conditions it is rather difficult to submit them to artistic discipline as well, even if there were anyone of sufficient stature to impose it.

Naturally, comments are made, ideas modified and hints given, but in a very restricted and limited form, and it is most unlikely that with the present personnel any more discipline can be exerted.

In addition, most of the ballets have been looked over by representatives of the choreographer's own company, but mainly to ensure that what is to be presented will not bring ruin or disgrace, and I know of only one case where useful comment was made.

ARTISTIC ADVISERS

Obviously, the Sunday Ballet Club should take steps to set up a workable committee with members drawn from the world of ballet, to interview prospective choreographers, to select ballets for performance, and to give them guidance during rehearsals.

Continued on page 17

Great Star Becomes Opéra Ballet Master

by JOHN PERCIVAL

GEORGE SKIBINE was born in 1920 near Kharkov, in the Ukraine, only a couple of hundred miles or so from Kiev where the 15-year-old Serge Lifar was then a student. Like Lifar, whom he has just succeeded as ballet-master at the Paris Opéra, Skibine has travelled round the world to reach his present position, building for himself on the way an international reputation as a ballet star. In this country he has made himself one of the most popular of all foreign dancers to appear here in the last decade. He had, in fact, danced here much earlier, but was still only 19 in 1939 and spent the war years in America, dancing with the two Ballet Russe companies and with Ballet Theatre and serving in the Intelligence branch of the U.S. armed forces. Thus the first time a British audience saw him as a mature dancer was in 1948, in the first Covent Garden season of the Marquis de Cuevas' company.

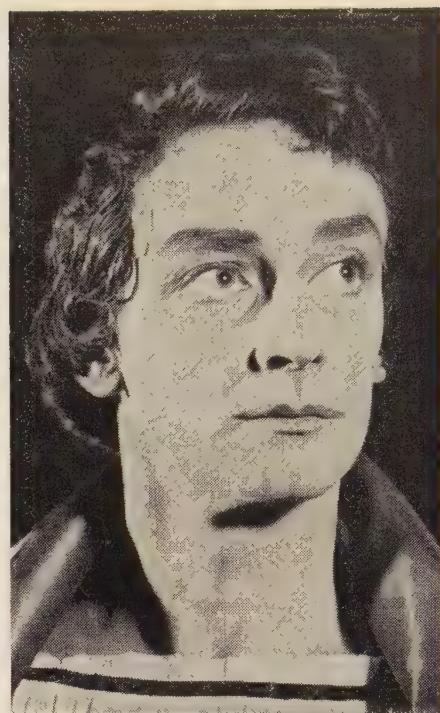
On the opening night he danced two rôles. First came the title part in *Sebastian*, a long and silly ballet with his performance as its only redeeming feature. He leapt high and danced with grace; his partnering was strong and sure. More important, he really looked and moved like the Moorish servant he portrayed, and overcame the implausibilities of the plot to attract sympathy for the victim of witch-craft who sacrificed himself for love.

His other ballet that evening was *Noir et Blanc*. Other dancers (René Bon, for instance, or Serge Golovine) have shown a more brilliant technique in the solo Mazurka, but none has given a more completely satisfying total performance than Skibine, with his sense of intense nervous energy and restrained fire. His quiet ardour in the *pas de deux*, too, made a somewhat over-ingenious piece of choreography look natural and unaffected and the force of his presence throughout was such that he dominated the stage just as much when walking down a flight of steps in the finale as in his solo passages.

Even if Skibine had never appeared in London again after that night, we should still have known the quality of his talent. Essentially a romantic dancer, he commands the stage and his audience by his combination of intensity and natural charm.

When necessary, Skibine can subordinate himself completely to his rôle. This happened in *Concerto Barocco*, where the solitary man is exclusively a supporter of the ballerina. Skibine moved beautifully across the stage and lifted his partner with ease, but the essence of his superiority over most other dancers who have taken this part was that one noticed him less, not more than them.

He is equally at home, however, in a part which is all self-emphasis. To the part of

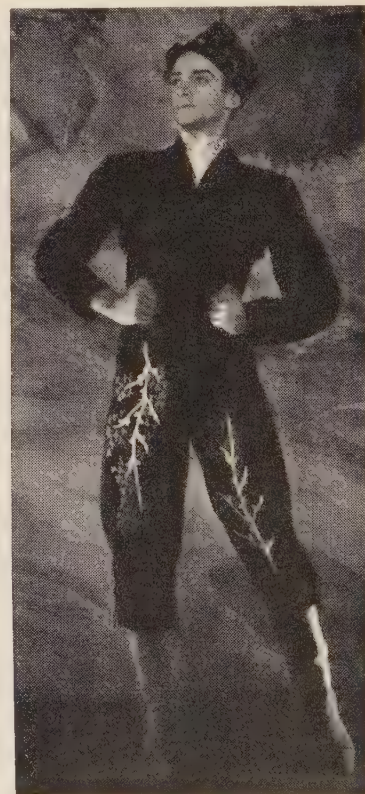


SKIBINE THROUGH THE YEARS: Above, a portrait of the new ballet-master at the Paris Opéra.

Below left, Skibine talking to the star of the Diaghilev Ballet and now a famous teacher, Félia Doubrovskia. On the other side is his wife, Marjorie Tallchief, who is one of the great ballerinas of our time.

Below middle, Skibine as the Poet in an early production of Balanchine's *Night Shadow* when it was first given by the de Cuevas Ballet.

Below right, Skibine in Massine's *Aleko* with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in America during the war.



the leading man in *Les Biches* he brought a fine swaggering masculinity which both pointed the humour and sharpened the edge of the satire. In Ana Ricarda's *Dona Ines de Castro* he played a melodramatic part to the hilt and even succeeded in making credible the scene where the mad Don Pedro has the dead heroine crowned and forces his courtiers to pay homage to her.

No less broad in its conception and execution, although this time with comic intention and effect, was Skibine's performance in Massine's *Capriccio Espagnol*. As the leading peasant he hid behind a stubbly make-up and an inane grin, yet filled the part with life, warmth, colour and humour. Generally, however, Skibine works with a more delicate touch than this. Thus, although he got all the fun possible out of the Husband in Antonia Cobos' *The Mute Wife*, he handled the part as carefully as if he had been creating a serious dramatic rôle, extracting his comic effects from only the slightest exaggeration of the affected "period" poses.

Skibine has a remarkable gift for the delicate nuances of style which establish atmosphere. His Hussar in *Le Beau Danube* was, in points of detail, about the furthest removed from Massine's own interpretation of any I have seen, yet with its amalgam of sentiment and manliness the nearest to Massine's in its general effect, infused throughout with the right lilting quality of movement. In *Les Sylphides*, which he danced with a kind of rapt fervour which made the male part more interesting than it often is, he established the dreamlike atmosphere by the simple device of gazing straight ahead as if lost in a reverie.

In the classical rôles, Skibine has many virtues. He knows exactly how far a flamboyant gesture can be taken to make its fullest effect without becoming affected. I once saw him rehearsing the second act of *Swan Lake* and thought he had overstepped

the boundary to the point of burlesquing the rôle. That evening I saw him dance Siegfried and realised that, with the addition of scenery and costumes, stage lighting and a full orchestra, the movements which had earlier seemed exaggerated now looked exactly right.

He knows not only how to hold his partner to show her to best advantage, but also how to let her go. In the *Don Quixote* or *Aurora pas de deux*, when he releases his ballerina's hand he steps quickly back to admire her from a distance, thus emphasising the balance with which she holds an *arabesque*. For many years, of course, his most usual partner has been his wife, Marjorie Tallichief; naturally well suited, by style and appearance, to dance together, they have developed a strong sense of *rapport* which considerably enhances their work.

To the more frankly bravura rôles, such as the *pas de deux* from *Raymonda* and *Don Quixote*, Skibine has brought a sound technique and an attractive manner, but not the dash of excitement which makes the difference between a creditable and an outstanding performance. As Albrecht in *Giselle*, however, he achieved distinction by the combination of his abilities as dancer, partner and actor.

The character he discovered for himself in this rôle was one designed to mitigate as far as possible the less pleasant aspects of Albrecht's actions (his thoughtlessness and selfishness which lead to Giselle's death) by stressing his boyish irresponsibility. Aided by his slender figure and youthful appearance, his soft smile and big appealing eyes, he made Albrecht seem very young and inexperienced. This effect was enhanced by the characteristic posture he adopted: his hands clasped behind his back, his whole body swaying slightly from side to side.

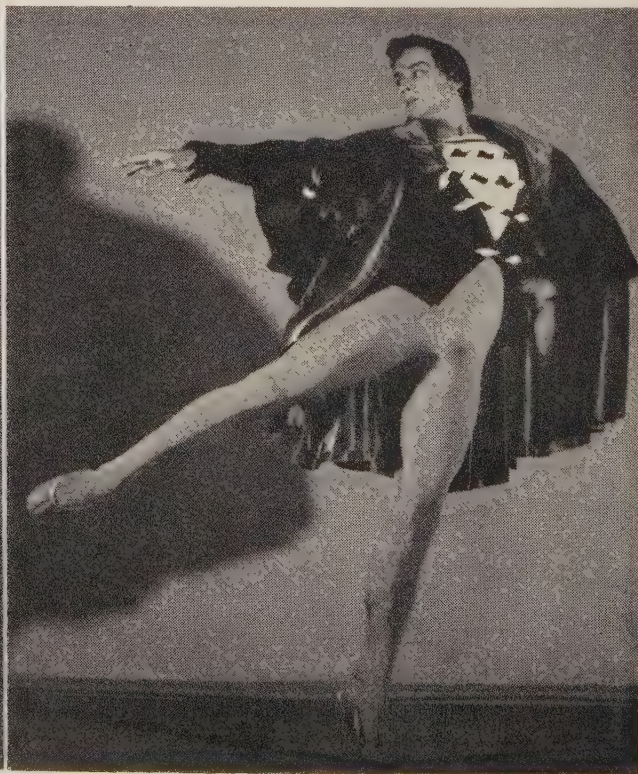
When his identity was challenged by Hilarion, he threw down the sword petulantly as a boy might, but, soon cheer-

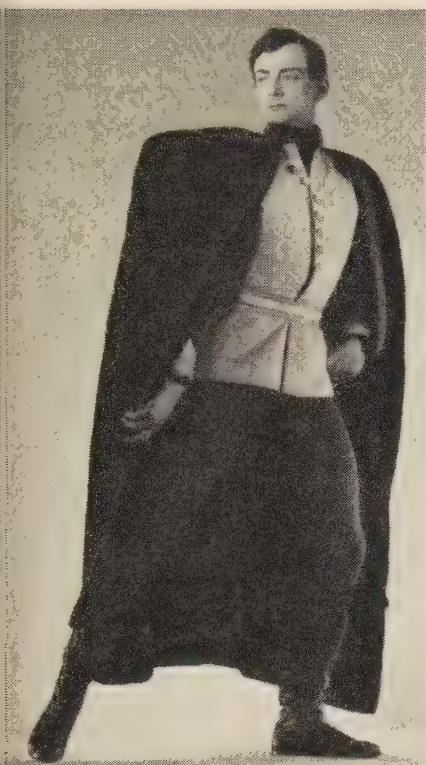
ful again with a boy's light-heartedness, went to Bathilde to explain away his peasant disguise with an easy lie about having gone hunting. A simple gesture indicated that this did not really matter, and he mimed his affection for Bathilde before kneeling to kiss her hand. The result was to make Albrecht's behaviour more easily understood and excused.

The intelligence which Skibine reveals in building up a rôle with details such as these can be seen at work also in the ballets he has created. Sometimes, I think, the intelligence is too much in control, as in *The Tragedy of Verona*, where he tried to cram too much of the Romeo and Juliet story into the brief space of Tchaikovsky's fantasy-overture. Where other choreographers had been content, in using this music, to sketch in only the essence of the situation, Skibine's intelligent wish to follow Shakespeare led him to include the detail too, to the ballet's confusion. He included even such an incident as the Friar's failure to let Romeo know of Juliet's feigned death, but was forced by the score to compress this to so brief a form that many of the audience must have been only puzzled by it if they noticed it at all.

To the intelligence of Skibine the choreographer is added good taste; all of his ballets which I have had the opportunity of seeing have been stylish, unpretentious, and have expressed a dramatic situation through interesting and appropriate dancing. For the most part, however, they have not gone beyond these qualities to reveal the flash of a true creative imagination. Of Skibine's ballets seen in this country, only *Idylle* has sprung to vivid life for the whole of its length. This ballet was slight in its intention, employing only three dancers to tell a simple anecdote, but it fulfilled its intentions completely and proved charming, witty and spectacular. Its honesty of purpose and of the means by which it achieved that purpose appear to have made it as

SKIBINE IN MOVEMENT: Left, a beautiful pass with a cape when he played the rôle of the Tорео in Ana Ricarda's Spanish ballet, *Del Amor y de la Muerte*, for the de Cuevas company. Right, an arabesque as Romeo in his own version of Tchaikovsky's *Romeo et Juliette*.





THREE STUDIES IN STYLE: Left in Skibine's own version of *Le Prisonnier du Caucase* (based on Pushkin's poem and to Khatchaturian's *Gayane* music). Centre, Skibine in a *Temps de Poisson*. Right, in his own very successful *pas de trois*, *Idylle*, which he created mainly to show the remarkable technique of his wife, Marjorie Tallchief.

popular when danced recently on the stage of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow as in other more modest circumstances.

With his new appointment, Skibine is entering into more ambitious fields as a choreographer. He joined the Paris Opéra company as a premier danseur étoile partly in order to give his twin sons a settled home, and seems to have found himself very much at home there. Now, as ballet-master, he will have greater opportunities than most choreographers to mount new works, but will carry a correspondingly greater responsibility.

The reign of Lifar, extending over nearly thirty years, built up a strong company, but his choreographic theories were sometimes more convincing on paper than on the stage. If Skibine can develop a repertory reflecting the sense of style and drama he possesses in such high degree as a dancer, the future of the French national ballet will be in good hands.

The only possible cause for regret attaching to Skibine's present position is that it has deprived us of the opportunity to see him in his finest rôle. As the Poet in *Night Shadow*, Skibine summed up exactly and conveyed with meticulous precision the distinction, the reserve, the romance and the mystery of Balanchine's most popular dramatic ballet. This work aims at a dark romantic mood, a sense of strange events and unexpected relationships; but it achieves its misty, evocative and ambiguous effects not through vagueness but by the juxtaposition of a number of very definite and clearly indicated actions.

The power with which Skibine played his part was never more clearly seen than at the Pavlova commemoration performance at the Stoll Theatre in 1956, when he danced the sleepwalking *pas de deux* with Marjorie Tallchief. The stage was framed in a garish arch which formed a permanent setting for *Kismet*, and most of the other items on the programme had suffered from its incon-

gruity. Yet Skibine, discovered by the rising curtain in the familiar pose of the Poet left alone by the other guests, had only to take a few steps, gaze around him and raise his arm to evoke, quite clearly and decisively, the moonlit garden and the windowed tower in which the sleepwalker was descend-

ing a staircase. There could have been no more convincing demonstration of the mastery of style and mood which enables Skibine to fill out a rôle until it affects the whole atmosphere of a ballet, and which makes him the uniquely sensitive artist he is.

WHITHER SUNDAY BALLET CLUB?

Continued from page 14.

This is very much more difficult than it sounds. In the first place, those who are competent to do the job are likely to be working for a ballet company already, and can spare very little time. Secondly, the club's main strength is that it has no affiliation with any one company, and can present dancers from them all. As soon as it sets up a selection committee of the kind described it is liable to be faced with enormous problems in balancing the membership between those drawn from one company and another. Anyone who doubts this might try drawing up a list of, say, five names for inclusion in such a committee, and then thinking over the likely results.

Moreover, it is not necessarily a good thing to submit the ideas of a young choreographer to the judgment of a senior member of his own company. His ideas are likely to be little more than a pale reflection of the views of the "establishment", and he may be unduly influenced by any comments made. More rarely, too rarely, I am afraid, he has reacted strongly away from the policy of his company, and looks to the club for an opportunity of working his own ideas out.

The same objections apply, with added force, to the provision of guidance in rehearsal. It is even more difficult to find people to watch rehearsals than to get them to attend meetings of a selection committee, which can at least be held at a mutually convenient place and time. Further, for the

reasons already given, there may be grave disadvantages in having ballets guided by a senior member of the choreographer's own company. On the other hand, to choose an adviser from another company is hardly likely to appeal to the directors of the companies concerned.

THE FUTURE

The foregoing account is as full and fair a description as I can give of the difficulties that the club faces, and may serve to explain why it has not done what some outsiders would like to see it do. It may reasonably be asked whether, in the circumstances, the club can ever do anything worthwhile, but this can be countered by pointing out that it has already had one definite success, and has put on a few other works which were certainly worth showing. All this is very creditable for a newly-founded organisation which must, in its early days, feel its way.

However, I do not think that it can continue at the same level. The club has received every indulgence from the public, if not always from the press, and since, on Sunday September 14, this indulgence was rewarded, a considerably higher average will be expected in the future. I think that if the club continues to do no more than hope for the occasional miracle, its decline and extinction will follow fairly rapidly.

CONCLUSIONS

For the reasons given in the preceding section, I think that the club can survive only by raising its artistic standard. This will be difficult, but by no means impossible:

Continued on page 34

Ballet Perspectives: 8

Serenade

by CLIVE BARNES

IN 1933 Lincoln Kirstein and Edward Warburg invited George Balanchine to start a ballet school in America, and the choreographer left Europe for the United States in the same year. The School of American Ballet was founded in New York on January 1, 1934, with the avowed intention "to develop trained American dancers who will continually provide material for a permanent company, which will create the combined ballets of the best American painters, musicians, poets, and eventually choreographers."

According to Anatole Chujoy, in his history *The New York City Ballet*, it was originally intended by the School's sponsors that performances should not be given for three years, but for a variety of reasons a producing company was formed within twelve months.

In his book *Complete Stories of the Great Ballets* (Ed. by Francis Mason) Balanchine himself has written at some length on how *Serenade* came to be created. "As part of the school curriculum, I started an evening ballet class in stage technique, to give students some idea of how dancing on stage differs from class work. *Serenade* evolved from the lessons I gave."

Although the ballet now in the repertory of The New York City Ballet differs somewhat from this first version, the impromptu nature of its original creation has left its mark on the finished work. The ballet was choreographed in pieces according to the number of pupils who attended class. "One day," Balanchine says, "when all the girls

rushed off the floor area we were using as a stage, one of the girls fell and began to cry. I told the pianist to keep on playing and kept this bit in the dance. Another day, one of the girls was late for class, so I left that in too." When the ballet was eventually staged the entire work was, of course, revised and elaborated, but in a more theatrical form these two accidental incidents found a place in the complete ballet.

Talking to Balanchine a few years ago, he repeated these incidents and assured me that "the structure of the present ballet as given today is basically the same as that sketched out in those first stage-classes of the School."

The ballet's unofficial *première* was at a semi-private, open-air performance given at Woodland, the New York estate of Felix Warburg. The students' first performance consisted of *Serenade*, *Mozartiana*, and *Dreams*. *Mozartiana* was a revival from the repertory of *Les Ballets 1933*, and *Dreams* was a reworking to new music of *Songes* from the same company, so *Serenade* has the undisputed distinction of being Balanchine's first American ballet. The performance should have been on June 9, 1934 — and most reference books give this date as the *première* — but in fact, after the opening ballet the performance was rained off, so *Serenade* had to be postponed until the following evening, June 10.

After the success of this student performance, the School formed a company and this gave a three-day season at the Avery Memorial Theatre, Hartford, Connecticut,

opening on December 6, 1934. The cast for *Serenade* included Kathryn Muldowney, Heidi Vosseler, and Charles Laskey. The next year "The Producing Company of the School of American Ballet" assumed the title of The American Ballet and gave a New York season at the Adelphi Theatre, opening on March 1. The first ballet was *Serenade*, which now had costumes by Jean Lurçat, and on the following day John Martin wrote in *The New York Times* that it was "a serviceable rather than an inspired piece of work". The cast included Leyda Anchutina, Ruthanna Boris, Gisella Cacci-alanza, Kathryn Muldowney, William Dollar and Charles Laskey.

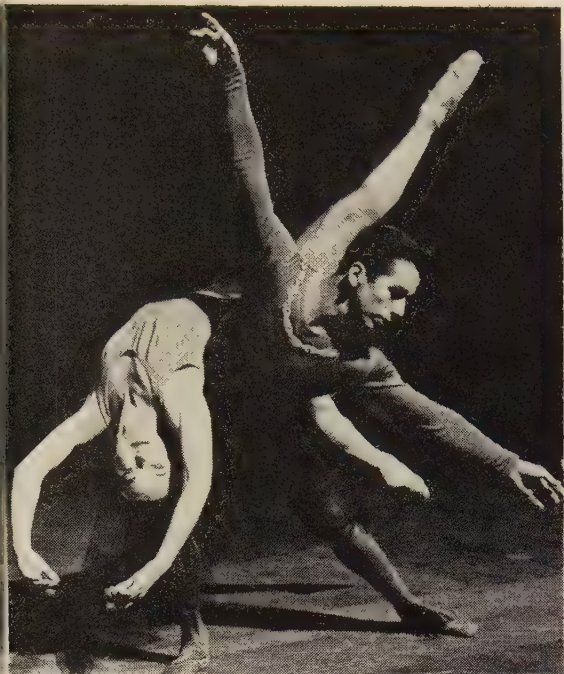
There was no leading female rôle in this 1935 production but a group of soloists; when, however, on October 17, 1940, the ballet was taken into the repertory of The Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo many of these soloist parts were amalgamated into one rôle, danced first by Marie-Jeanne and at certain later performances by Alexandra Danilova. The male leads were Frederic Franklin and Igor Youskevitch, and the Lurçat costumes were again used. In 1941 Kirstein's American Ballet (which had undergone many vicissitudes since 1935) made an official goodwill tour of Latin America and *Serenade* was revived for the repertory with new costumes designed by Alvin Colt. The principal dancer was Marie-Jeanne.

After the war Balanchine was invited to produce four ballets for the Paris Opéra. His first production was *Serenade*, which had its *première* on April 30, 1947, with décor and costumes by André Delfau. The principal rôle was danced by Maria Tallchief, appearing with the company as guest artist.

On October 18, 1948, it entered the permanent repertory of the newly-formed New York City Ballet. The new costumes were by Barbara Karinska and the cast included Marie-Jeanne, Herbert Bliss and Nicholas Magallanes. Immediately prior to the company's first European engagement at Covent Garden in 1950, the ballerina rôle was again broken down into fragments for a group of

SERENADE: Left, Maria Tallchief and Nicholas Magallanes in the New York City Ballet production of the Balanchine-Tchaikovsky ballet. Right, Tanaquil LeClercq in another movement from the same work.





SERENADE: Left, Patricia Wilde with Nicholas Magallanes in one of the later movements from the work. Right, Melissa Hayden in an arabesque with the corps de ballet. In this, and in the right-hand picture on the opposite page, the costumes are the most recent created for this work.

soloists. This "serviceable work" had the natural distinction of being the opening ballet of the Covent Garden season (July 10), and has since been seen all over Europe and America.

The most recent production was by the Royal Danish Ballet and was first given in Copenhagen on January 16, 1957. The cast included Margrethe Schanne, Mona Vangsaa, Inge Sand, Verner Andersen, and Kjeld Noack, and the production was mounted personally by Balanchine.

Serenade was one of the first ballets to show the revival of interest in classical dancing almost as an end in itself. During the first two decades of the Fokine/Diaghilev reformation the emphasis was placed on dramatic ballet. Diaghilev's revival in 1921 of Petipa's *The Sleeping Beauty* was a straw in the changing wind, and slowly and surely the forces of the counter-reformation, that was to re-establish the position of academic dancing in ballet, piled up.

The growing tendency towards classicism could be seen in such diverse ballets as Nijinska's plotless *Etudes de Bach* (1931), Massine's allegorical *Les Présages* (1932) and even Balanchine's own *Apollo* (1928) and *Cotillon* (1932). In 1930 Lincoln Kirstein foresaw that "Balanchine . . . was leading out of mere ingenuity into a revived, purer, cleaner classicism." *Serenade* provided an early fulfilment to this prophesy.

The ballet is in four movements following the score, Tchaikovsky's *Serenade in C Major for String Orchestra*, op. 48, although Balanchine has changed the order of the movements. The very Russian *Finale (Allegro con Spirito)* being used as the third movement and the ballet ending with the *Larghetto Elegiaco*. Although *Serenade* contains no narrative, the music lends itself to dramatic situations and these the choreographer has utilised.

The dancers in their neutral costumes meet, part and love. Some are happy, some are sad, but the context of their emotions is left unexplained. The audience can make of these happenings what it will; if it wants symbolism, it can find symbolism, if it

wants drama, it can find drama.

Yet it must be stressed that the ballet has no narrative pattern, only the pattern of the music, the dancing and its dramatic overtones. Balanchine (*op. cit.*) has written ". . . many people think there is a concealed story in the ballet. There is not. There are, simply, dancers in motion to a beautiful piece of music. The only story is the music's story, a serenade, a dance, if you like, in the light of the moon."

However some passages are more explicit than others. The *pas de deux* in the second movement, to the famous waltz, unavoidably portrays a boy and girl in love, and the incidents of the elegiac last movement, where a boy is forced to choose between two girls, although open to many interpretations, tells a clear story with ambiguous poetry.

That *Serenade* contains eddies of emotion and undercurrents of feeling freed from the dictatorship of time that can demote general truths down to particular facts is not in itself a merit, and quite a few bad ballets have been produced that aimed at evoking just the same nameless, faceless drama as is called up by Balanchine. The lasting quality of *Serenade* is to be found in the genius of its choreography which kindles the audience's imagination.

From the moment when the curtain rises on a motionless group of girls, regularly spaced and waiting like priestesses before a ritual, until the ballet's final triumphant pose, the stage is filled with richly invented movement.

The choreography has a sweeping breadth of design that constantly engages the mind and eye. Groups of dancers flash into one's field of vision breathing life into the music; the athletic spring of one dancer is contrasted with the quiet stillness of another: the movements have a varied unity and surprising aptness. The drama is understated yet emphatic, and the ballet has the yearning romanticism of the music that gave its birth.

The ballet's faults are almost entirely structural. The work seems to call for a

continuous development that, of course, the four movements of the score cannot sustain. The music itself is of markedly uneven quality and shapeless in construction. Yet for all its defects it has Tchaikovsky's "sad Russian soul" singing out pure and true. The composer said of his work: "The *Serenade* . . . I wrote from inner compulsion: I felt it, and therefore venture to hope that it does not lack artistic quality." Balanchine "felt it" also, and has contrived to build upon this prettily tragic music a theatre piece with something of the unfulfilled yearning-quality of Tchevov.

When *Serenade* was first given in London it was danced before a plain cyclorama, and dressed in the dulllest of blue costumes. During the company's second visit in 1952 the costumes were slightly improved, but a consistent factor of both seasons was the magical lighting of Jean Rosenthal, who made as positive a contribution to the triumph of the ballet as would a successful designer.

On its first London performance — July 10, 1950 — the ballet was danced by Janet Reed, Patricia Wilde, Melissa Hayden, Maria Tallchief, Herbert Bliss and Nicholas Magallanes. Subsequent casts in London have included Diana Adams, Tanaquil LeClercq, Yvonne Mounsey, Francisco Moncion and Frank Hobi. All performances during both the 1950 and 1952 seasons were at a consistently superb level, and while it is unfair to mention individuals an exception can perhaps be made in favour of the incredible allegro double work performed in the last movement by Wilde and Magallanes.

It is most regrettable that the English national repertory only contains one Balanchine ballet, and it is greatly to be hoped that the opportunity of mounting more Balanchine works will be taken in the near future. When that time comes *Serenade* would be a valuable acquisition. And is it too much to hope that New York City Ballet itself — now one of the world's great companies — will soon make a return visit that is already long overdue?



MARKOVA IN LONDON: Left, Alicia Markova, as Taglioni, between Dame Ninette de Valois and Marie Rambert after the R.A.D. Matinee at the London Coliseum in Douglas Elston's picture. Right, Markova at the birthday party of Festival Ballet soloist, Jean-Pierre Alban. She is seen between Beryl Grey and Frederick Ashton being handed food by her host in Roy Round's picture. Alban has partnered Beryl Grey through Festival Ballet's provincial tour and is now partnering Markova in *Where the Rainbow Ends*.

curtain up!

Voluntary Royal Patrons

IT is one thing to go to the ballet for diplomatic reasons, but it is quite another thing to go because you enjoy it. For many years now, since the days before the war when she was still Duchess of York, I have known that the Queen Mother enjoyed going to ballet. Not only that but she is a most fair and just critic of what she sees and enthusiastically applauds what she likes — frequently galvanising the often apathetic British audiences into something closely resembling action. Of course she was at Covent Garden to see *Ondine* as soon as it was possible for her to fit a visit into her heavy list of engagements. She took Princess Margaret with her and seems to have passed on to her youngest daughter some of her wonderful enthusiasm. A few nights later, Princess Margaret went to see *Ondine* again. With a private party sitting in the middle of the stalls circle she spent most of the evening talking to the ballet's choreographer, Frederick Ashton. Last year she showed the same enthusiasm for Kenneth MacMillan's *The Burrow* and paid it several visits. She is not unknown to turn up at the Opera House to see the programmes of short ballets and thus leads the nation in the resolution you have all been asked to make in this month's editorial on page five.

The Queen Mother's grand-daughter, Princess Anne, is one of ballet's newer followers. She went for the first time, accompanying her grandmother and her aunt, to the recent R.A.D. Matinee at the Coliseum. She showed every sign of adoring the whole business. When asked by Dame Margot Fonteyn afterwards which of the many items she liked best, she replied with

Royal tact that it was all so lovely that it was hard to choose. I have a private opinion that if she really liked any one thing more than another it was Lucette Aldous in an excerpt from the Rambert *Coppélia*. Anyway, it seems that ballet has won for itself yet another fervent Royal patron, so the succession is in safe hands.

Girls eventually become girls

THE Christmas revival of *Cinderella* at Covent Garden on December 23 came at an appropriate date since it was the tenth anniversary of the ballet's first performance in London at the same theatre. This first full-length British ballet is being transformed this year by having women playing the rôles of the two Ugly Sisters. I don't expect that many people know that this was, in fact, the original intention. Moyra Fraser, who returns to the Royal Ballet after 13 years' absence, during which time she has made her name as a revue star, was originally to have created what has become the Helpmann-MacMillan sister. Instead she accepted another engagement and Ashton then decided to follow British Christmas pantomime tradition by using men for the comic female parts. The other sister, always associated now with Ashton himself, was to have been played by Margaret Dale, but this time it will be played by Margaret Hill, who is, without doubt, one of the wittiest dancers in British ballet today.

The Covent Garden "throw-away" for this season has, I notice, applied to the ballet company the practice usual with opera, and put an asterisk against Moyra Fraser's name to indicate that it is her first appearance at the theatre. A good idea but unfortunately not true. Although she left the

ballet company before their move to Covent Garden, Moyra Fraser has been seen before on that illustrious stage, clad in a flesh-coloured woolly vest, as the "naked" Venus in the J. B. Priestley-Arthur Bliss opera. *The Olympians*.

U.S. Ballet for Russia

FOR several years now there have been rumours of American ballet companies going to the U.S.S.R. In fact there was once the possibility of Lucia Chase, in the early "fifties", taking American National Ballet Theatre there, but eventually the project, as do so many projected visits to the Soviet Union, fell through. Now it seems as though there is every chance of an American visit materialising — and America's youngest company at that. Plans are under way for Jerome Robbins' Ballets U.S.A. to go to Russia in the near future under the cultural international exchange set-up. This company was only formed last year for the festival in Spoleto in Italy. Since then it has played in Europe and in America with enormous success. It is one of the first international ballet companies to have a completely American repertoire. There are persistent rumours that an enterprising management are to bring this company to London in the spring. In which case they can be assured of a warm welcome, and let us hope that their London appearances do not clash with too many other dance spectacles.

Soviet visitor unannounced

TWO days before he made television history by partnering Nadia Nerina in the magic box's first full-scale *Giselle*, Bolshoi star Nicolai Fadeychev was at Covent Garden — watching Nerina dance the same part with Michael Somes. I hear that Dame Ninette de Valois was surprised to see him. She would have been happy to have him dance the part of Albrecht as guest artist. Fadeychev would also have been happy to do so but the BBC, it seems, had not thought to let the Opera House

authorities know that he would be here for week of rehearsal.

At the performance in the box with Fadeychev were Niels-Bjorn Larsen from Denmark (Hilarion in the broadcast) and producer Margaret Dale. They all seemed to enjoy the performance. In view of the very successful collaboration of Nerina and Fadeychev in this TV production, I predict that if the entire Royal Ballet doesn't go to Moscow in 1959 (as we all hope), then Nerina will be there alone before the year is out.

Nerina is certainly getting around these days, as I hear that in the spring she is to give another of those Albert Hall concerts with John Gilpin as her partner.

Change-your-mind corner

SINCE the *Daily Express*, in an "I predict" column, started the rumour that John Gilpin would join the Royal Ballet — and it was only a shot-in-the-dark after all — rumours have been floating around London thick and fast: that he had already signed with the Royal Ballet, that he would dance with the company on their next American tour, that he was forming his own company. It has been reported that when asked, Dame Ninette de Valois and Frederick Ashton denied any knowledge of such a move. Where lies the truth? Well, as far as this paper is concerned, John Gilpin remains the male star of London's Festival Ballet until he chooses to announce any change himself.

For many years, Dame Margot Fonteyn has said that she does not want to make films. Now, again in the *Daily Express*, she has declared that she will make several short films of certain rôles of her own choosing. Considering the wonderful way she is dancing during the present season it seems to be a most splendid idea and what many of us have hoped for over a great number of years. This rumour we hope is really true.

Ashton's foreign import

IN Britain we never seem to see the works which Frederick Ashton creates outside the country, and this means that those devotees, unable to afford the trip to foreign parts, have rather missed-out on a number of his important works. At least we shall have the consolation of seeing at least one of his ballets which were created abroad. His version of Ravel's *La Valse*, made for Teatro alla Scala in Milan last year, is to be revived for the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden with its original designs by André Levasseur. This work is to be mounted on some of the younger members of the company, which is a good thing as so many new ballets only have important rôles for the established stars. But if he has now decided to mount some of his works, originally created abroad, on the British company, let us hope that he soon decides to recreate his *Romeo and Juliet*, which he first did for the Royal Danish Ballet, at Covent Garden. For if Fonteyn does not want to dance the rôle, always associated with Galina Ulanova, at least there are some splendid new girls in the Royal Ballet who would make perfect Juliets.

Fonteyn and MacMillan

A PART from Nora Kaye, in two works for American Ballet Theatre, Kenneth MacMillan has not created works for any established international stars. Though it is true that several dancers have achieved international status after they had appeared in his works. Now he is to create a new short work for two very famous stars — Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes. Both dancers are appearing in Monte Carlo during the two ballet weeks known as the

Saison de Noël, though in actual fact they will not be appearing until the early days of the New Year owing to previous Covent Garden commitments.

I hear that Fonteyn asked MacMillan to create a new *pas de deux* with a slight story so he decided on the Orpheus legend and chose some Milhaud music. The ballet will be designed by Nicholas Georgiadis, who is also very busy working for his first big exhibition of paintings to be held at the Redfern Gallery in the beginning of January.

This will not be the first time that MacMillan has worked in the famous Monte Carlo rehearsal room and theatre because two years ago, almost to the day, he was there to create and rehearse his *Winter's Eve* for Ballet Theatre.

Quick off the mark

USUALLY festivals are blamed for announcing their intentions so late that it is impossible for most people to adjust their summer plans to fit into the arrangements. The International Festival of Nervi, Genoa, has now learnt by five years of experience that most people start to arrange their summer holidays in January. Already they have announced that their 5th festival will be held in the Park of Nervi from July 15 to August 5. Although the programmes are not yet finalised, readers can rest assured that they will be shown programmes of great international importance while, at the same time, enjoying the delights of the Ligurian Riviera.

Intimates together

FOR many years now, the Intimate Opera Company has been touring the length and breadth of Britain successfully bringing opera to places which could not normally house major opera companies. Now I hear that this group is to be joined by a small ballet group headed by Margit Muller. Sandwiched between two short operas — Menotti's *The Telephone* and Offenbach's *Bachelor's Bond* — the dancers will give excerpts from classical ballets. Although this combined operation will open a tour in some of the larger towns, there is every chance that in the future it will play in the many small towns and villages across the country who would not otherwise get the opportunity of seeing either art "in the live".

happy birthday to...

	February
Sandra Short	Ballet Rambert 23
Solange Golovine	De Cuevas International Ballet 24
Doreen Eastlake	Royal Ballet I 25
Lyde Peralta	De Cuevas International Ballet 26
Yvonne Cartier	27
Todd Bolender	New York City Ballet 27
	March
Anthony Burke	1
Marcel Chojnacki	Canadian National Ballet 2
Eileen Ward	Ballet Rambert Organisation 3
Dorothea Zaymes	Royal Ballet I 4
Earl Kraul	Canadian National Ballet 5
Diane Anthony	American Ballet Theatre 7
Valerie Marsh	Ballet Rambert 7
Maurice Metliss	Royal Ballet I 8
Leslie White	Royal Ballet II 10
Tamara Karsavina	10
Sylvia Singleton	Ballet Rambert 12
David Drew	Royal Ballet I 12
Ursula Moreton	Royal Ballet Organisation 13
Pirmin Trecu	Royal Ballet I 13
Igor Youskevitch	Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo 13
Deirdre Dixon	Royal Ballet I 14
Jocelyn Terrell	Canadian National Ballet 16
Lillian Welle'n	De Cuevas International Ballet 16
Walter Trevor	In New Zealand 17
Jeanette Cassells	Canadian National Ballet 18
Raymond Moller	Canadian National Ballet 19
Ray Powell	Royal Ballet I 20
Valerie Reece	Royal Ballet II 21
Vladimir Skouratoff	In Broken Date 22
Rowena Jackson	Royal Ballet I 24
Sheila Alletson	Ballet Rambert 24
Lilian Jarvis	Canadian National Ballet 25
Joan Harris	Bavarian State Opera 26
Leonide Massine	26
Joan Benesh	Royal Ballet Organisation 26



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ADAM & CHARLES BLACK



A WARNING OF DISASTER: Two scenes from the first act of Margaret Dale's BBC television production of *Giselle*. Left, Albrecht (Nicolai Fadeychev) is confronted by Hilarion (Niels-Bjorn Larsen) about his attention to Giselle (Nadia Nerina). Right, Berthe, Giselle's mother (Lydia Sokolova), is grief-stricken at the death of her daughter, as are Albrecht and the surrounding village girls. Photo: Seymour Grey.

A Great *Giselle*

Given on BBC Television on November 23. Music recorded by the Royal Opera House Orchestra. Conductor, Hugo Rignold. Décor, George Djurkovic. Costumes, Jane Scrase-Dickins. Producer, Margaret Dale.

Giselle NADIA NERINA
Albrecht NICOLAI FADEYECHEV
Myrtha MARGARET HILL
Wilfred PETER WRIGHT
Hilarion NIELS-BJORN LARSEN
Bathilde JULIA FARRON
The Duke of Courland

ALFRED RODRIGUES
Berthe LYDIA SOKOLOVA
and Full Company
Pas de Quatre (Act 1) ... PEARL GADEN,
JUNE LESLEY, BRENDA LAST,
JEANNETTE OSBORNE.

PUT the clock back only a year and think of the various television ballet productions, especially those of the classics, that we were being given. With those hit-or-miss entertainments in mind, I think it is true to say that most viewers had lost all hope of seeing ballet given an exciting presentation on this medium.

There seemed to be only two production alternatives. The first was the easy way out — the stage treatment. This virtually gave the viewer a ballet as he could more or less see it in a theatre, and it was never very satisfactory because it was a theatre production minus — minus the colour, the atmosphere, the effects of space, and an audience to stimulate the dancers.

The second approach should have been a better one because it took account of the fact that television was a new medium, differing from both stage and film (more considerably than viewers are generally aware), but possessing certain special advantages. Possibly in an attempt to make these advantages compensate for what television loses to the theatre, the challenge was often accepted too enthusiastically. Thus viewers tended to be confronted with so many trick effects — dissolves, slow motion, double-exposures, superimpositions, strange angles ranging from overhead aqua-ballet effects to *arabesque* legs pointed directly at one, and the like — that a ballet a viewer "knew" seemed often to have become curiously unrecognisable.

But throughout ballet's short television history, the most difficult problem of all has concerned atmosphere. So often a production, which in theory should have been commendable, seemed cold and remote. Somewhere between the studios and the screen in our darkened room, the atmosphere, so essential to ballet, had languished.

This production was really rather special. Atmosphere never lapsed. In many respects it so approached perfection that it seems quibbling to catalogue the blemishes. I must confess that I shuddered when I first saw the set. So many tree trunks to obscure dancers and test the nerves of cameramen and a cottage that looked as if it belonged to the Seven Dwarfs. But the trees didn't get in the way, and Bathilde and the Duke, with *entourage* of 20 dancers, did not all enter the cottage single file.

The sets, uninspiring though the first act

TELEVISION Reviewed by E. C. MASON

one looked, were an integral part of the production. The opening *pas de deux* seemed a more private romance as the cameras spied on the lovers from behind trees, or caught a glimpse of them over the shoulder of Hilarion, who, tense with jealousy, was spying too.

Nerina's fine performance must have been a surprise to those who remembered her very emphatic and, I thought, slightly harassed television Swanilda. If, in the Opera House her *Giselle* is too athletic and exuberant for some tastes, for television her interpretation is carefully modulated and intelligently restrained.

Her Mad Scene was especially pathetic. Her mind, lost in her anguish, she suddenly seemed a tiny figure plaintively crushed, and her face assumed a frighteningly plain expression that was most moving. In the theatre she is renowned for speed and lightness almost unparalleled; she has attack and is never behind the beat. On television, especially in Act 2 with the strength of Fadeychev's partnering to help her, her lightness is so enhanced that she seems to be quite without weight.

But the occasion was something more than the Anglo-Soviet *pas de deux* the press tended to make of it. There were glimpses of inspiration in the BBC's casting department also. The celebrated Danish mime, Niels-Bjorn Larsen, made Hilarion's out-of-control jealousy incredibly convincing, for he is an artist who knows how to use his eyes. Margaret Hill made a sternly intransigent Queen of the Wilis; Rodrigues, as a jovial Duke, suggested good wine and hearty eating; Julia Farron was a shy and dignified Bathilde; and Peter Wright was a very businesslike and serious factotum.

Finally, Sokolova, now 62 and enjoying the distinction of being the first English dancer to reach the rank of principal with Diaghilev, made a surprise reappearance as a motherly Mother with compassion written on her face.

Fadeychev was an admirable Albrecht, but he never seemed to quite fit into Margaret Dale's enterprising production. While his performance was subdued and never overplayed, his acting powers were possibly overshadowed by his immense brilliance as a dancer. English Albrechts generally strain the credulity of audiences in their attempts to suggest that Albrecht's impersonation of a peasant lover really fooled the villagers. With Fadeychev, on the other hand, it now remains for him to underline the nobility of Albrecht's background. One also sensed, especially in Act 1, that he had not entirely adjusted his dancing to the comparatively restricted stage space. In Act 2, however, he danced his *variations*, sequences of effortless turns and double *cabrioles*, with spectacular brilliance.

In this intelligent production of Margaret Dale's, there were also many original touches, some of which could even be incorporated in stage versions. Sokolova registered overawed astonishment at finding the Ducal party on her doorstep wanting refreshment. She hurried forward, with both arms stretched fluttering behind her beckoning, almost secretly, the village girls to follow her and be hospitable. We saw Giselle fling the necklace back at Bathilde's feet, and it was Hilarion, not Albrecht, who snatched the sword from her.

Through the window of the woodcutter's hut, we saw Hilarion's hand in close-up holding the hilt of Albrecht's sword. We were also given a very attractive perspective shot showing the village girls dancing their way on down a long country lane. Some of

them carried tambourines — remember the engravings of Grisi in the original production! Pushing his way through these groups of girls Hilarion tried to make his exit, but without success, for they force him to join in their dance. Rodrigues made his entrance, dragged on by two large mastiffs, and we saw, too (and I can only think it was an accident) Sokolova removing the grips from Giselle's hair with the skill of a professional hairdresser.

Moreover, Hilarion's drowning was as well managed as could be expected. Widened with fear, he leaped towards the camera, and then we were given a quick close-up of a miasmic pool. The ending was quietly effective, with wisps of mist filtering in to the screen as Albrecht walked forlornly away.

The cameras were resourcefully manipulated. At almost every point of the action they were directed on the point one felt they should be focused on, and there were no unnecessary close-ups to draw attention to irrelevant detail. Thus, on the technical side, the production hardly faltered apart from sensation or two of panic at the opening of the second act.

There were no radical or eccentric changes in the choreography, and the *corps de ballet* was very well trained indeed, apart from one isolated Wili who shuffled backwards awkwardly to take up a position. There were some very attractive long-shots of the *corps*, but until television screens become larger big group effects will never be really satisfying visually. Memories of the Bolshoi were stirred, too, by Fadeychev supporting Nerina in a beautiful horizontal line at full arms' length above his head in the *assemblé en tournant* lifts in Act 2.

I did not much care for some of the costumes. Fadeychev's was unflatteringly out of date, Sokolova looked too like a mother superior, Niels-Bjorn Larsen's hat tended to screen his face, Margaret Hill's entrance seemed to be hindered by what looked like a wispy evening wrap, and the double-tiered costumes of the peasant girls were a mistake.

In the opening act the lighting was not altogether consistent. When directed on the *corps* it made the eyes of the girls darken back into their sockets. The music was so well-tailored that the various cuts which had to be made failed to irritate one. But, on the other hand, it was by no means as well played as is desirable.

Reservations aside, a few more productions like this and dancers and viewers alike will stop making such remarks as "It wasn't bad . . . for television".

EL BALLET POPULAR DE MEXICO

Given on Independent Television's Chelsea at Nine on November 18. Producer, Wendy Toye.

THIS brief item must surely have won the award for being the oddest television ballet programme for 1958. The dancers themselves come nowhere near providing any technical excitement. Their works are composed exclusively of soft running movements, small jumps, and much trotting about, but everything is danced within a rigid framework of geometrical patterns.

However, it is the Mexican costumes which give the performance an air of sensation. The dancers actually wear great semi-circular headdresses, stylised from their

native art, that must be four feet high. In silhouette in profile they look like peacocks parading: in straight lines single file the headdresses disappear into a single line, but when the dancers turn side on and alternately lean backwards and forwards one gets the curious effect of a row of fans opening. From the scenic point of view this was very striking.

GRAND PAS CLASSIQUE

Given on Independent Television's Sunday Night at the Palladium on November 30. Music, Auber. Choreography, Gzovsky. BERYL GREY GERARD OHN

SINCE I last saw her in a concert *pas de deux* — the occasion being *Don Quixote* with Festival Ballet — Beryl Grey's technique has become sharper and more brilliant. Few of her characteristics would now stamp her as an English dancer. Partnered with great assurance by Gerard Ohn, she danced this difficult *pas de deux* with great *bravura* without ever losing neatness.

The orchestra was dreadful; only a muffled horn, a pizzicato string and an oboe could be heard dragging out the bubbling Auber score. So, under such circumstances, it may be unfair to say that Ohn is unmusical.

Grey's *fouettés* were done at a fast speed with changing *ports de bras*. They travelled a little towards the end of the sequence — an occurrence hard to detect on television because the cameras travel too and keep the dancer centred on the screen. However, they give the illusion that the backcloth is travelling — not the dancer.

BALLET RAMBERT

Four dances from *Faça* given on BBC

GISELLE AS A WILI: Two moments from the *pas de deux* in the second act of the television *Giselle* with the Bolshoi star, Nicolai Fadeychev, as Albrecht, and the Royal Ballet star, Nadia Nerina, as Giselle. In the right-hand picture they are seen in one of the beautiful lifts, *assemblé en tournant*, in which he holds her in a horizontal line at full arms-length above his head.

Photo: Seymour Grey





MEXICANS IN CHELSEA: Two scenes from the programme given by El Ballet Popular de Mexico on ITV's Chelsea at Nine programme. The impressive traditional fan-like headdresses worn by the dancers are clearly shown.

Television on November 30. Producer: Patricia Foy.
LUCETTE ALDOUS, GILLIAN MARTLEW, JUNE SANDBROOK, NORMAN DIXON, JOHN CHESWORTH

CAN anyone imagine a better source of television ballet material than Marie Rambert's rich repertoire? Only the television authorities themselves, it seems. It is a year since the company appeared on

BBC Television, and apart from some odd solos, I don't think it has ever been seen on the Independent network.

These extracts from *Façade* were so cleverly put over and with such a nice touch of absurdity that one can only regret that the entire work was not given. Both the Waltz and, especially, the Scotch Rhapsody are being very well danced at the moment and it is more the pity that they had to be

omitted.

Lucette Aldous danced the difficult Polka variation (with *double tour en l'air* restored) with crisp confidence. June Sandbrook, who has an unquenchable supply of natural charm, was an appealing Milkmaid. Gillian Martlew's interpretation of the Debutante has nice bite and wit, and she manages to suggest in the Tango that she is well on the downpath to the Argentine.

American Ladies and Royal Balletomania in new books

An American in Europe

THE SEVEN LEAGUES OF A DANCER, an account of the career of Doris Niles, by Serge Leslie (C. W. Beaumont, 30s.).

THERE are not many of the present British dance public who will remember Doris Niles. Frankly I had only known of her as a name before I went by chance to a recital she gave with Serge Leslie at the Fortune Theatre in 1936. But on the mainland of Europe she was a big name and her dance recitals and elaborate presentations in the theatre were famous. Coming to Europe in 1926, she found herself sailing up the Guadalquivir to Seville and then that old Spanish magic got her. She went to the finest Spanish dance teachers of the time and her reputation as a dancer increased until she danced for King Alfonso XII on several occasions. But although in her performances the Spanish dance took the lion's share, she was also a very fine dancer in other fields. I can remember her as an immaculate technician who brought great integrity to whatever she did. With the mass onslaught of huge ballet companies, the concert performer has today got rather swamped out, but in the between-wars period they were a vital part of the dance calendar. It is as a record of a tributary away from the main stream of Russian ballet that this book is of great interest, and as such it should be in all comprehensive dance libraries.

P. W.

American choreographer writes again

AND PROMENADE HOME, by Agnes de Mille (Boston: Atlantic-Little, Brown, \$5.00).

IN her first book, *Dance to the Piper*, Agnes de Mille told the story of her career up to the time of *Oklahoma!*, the musical in which her dances revolutionised the Broadway theatre. In this, her second autobiographical book, she brings the story up to the time of *Allegro* and, in every sense, it is a finer book than the first. Mainly, however, it is considerably better organised as a piece of literature.

Set in the period of the years of World War II, this includes the story of de Mille's meeting, courtship and marriage with Walter Prude, and of their meetings and partings during the war.

In retrospect, one can now see why her "Civil War Ballet" in *Bloomer Girl* remains as one of her great theatre pieces, and she tells of the heartache, anguish and torment she went through while creating it. Then, too, there are absorbing sections dealing with her other Broadway successes such as *Carousel* and *One Touch of Venus*, as well as *Tally-Ho* for Ballet Theatre. Interspersed throughout are wonderfully trenchant observations and character studies of such personalities as Martha Graham, Sol Hurok, Jerome Robbins, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Leonard Bernstein, as well as a host of dancers who have appeared in her works. Moreover, there is considerable material on choreography and various approaches to it, working methods and artistic aims. There is also a chapter explaining how some women substitute dancing for a normal sexual life that may well raise a storm of controversy. For anyone at all interested in dance this new book reads like *Gone with the Wind*, and I must add that, unable to put it down, I read it all in one night.

Arthur Todd.

Fine Feathers and how they are made

DRESSING FOR THE BALLET, by Joan Lawson and Peter Revitt (A. & C. Black, 16s.).

OF all the kinds of apparel which humans wear, those for dancing are the most complicated. The reason being that they are subjected to the most violent movement yet, at all times, they still have to look neat and tidy and never hamper the dancers in any way. Joan Lawson and Peter Revitt explain — in prose, diagrams and drawings — the basic construction of garments for the class, classical and Romantic and Demi-Character ballets, also for national dances. From these basic patterns it is possible to draft almost any theatrical costume you like to think of except for anything that has to be strictly tailored. The volume will prove invaluable to many people, especially those who are going to put on amateur performances. But don't think that because you can master the making of these costumes that you are going to become a Karinska overnight. Ballet costume making is an art in itself and there are thousands of little tricks — such as the knowledge of the behaviour of fabric and the handling of it while sewing, the use of the bias and the straight in cloth-cutting, the correct understanding of appliqué, the study of material movement, and so on — all of which turn the garment which merely covers the figure into the creation which enhances both it and the dance. To acquire this

knowledge can take a lifetime, and, judging by some of the frightening results we see in most ballets, it would seem that even a lifetime is not long enough. But as a start to understanding the complications of what a dancer wears, this is adequate enough.

P. W.

Ballet-making shown to the children

HOW A BALLET IS PRODUCED, by Joan Selby-Lowndes. (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 10s. 6d.)

TO illustrate the making of a ballet, the author takes a fictitious company at work on a new production of *The Sleeping Beauty*. Gerald the artistic director, Aubrey the designer, Ernest the conductor, Harry the business manager and others, explain their functions clearly. Although I can think of an equally good case for not telling how a ballet is made, the work is factually correct and written in an amusing style. "The third fairy was a small neat blonde with a sweet face and no brains." It is, of course, designed for young readers, and as such should be a welcome addition to children's libraries.

It is Gerald's landlady's small daughter who starts the definitions rolling by asking what is a choreographer. To escape similar questions I shall present my copy to my landlady's small daughter. The illustrations are hideous and there are some mis-spellings.

E. C. M.

Royal Ballet

MIKE DAVIS AT THE ROYAL BALLET (Oldbourne, 25s.).

THERE appears to be a minor spate of picture books devoted to the Royal Ballet, and this is undoubtedly one of the most attractive. I was personally rather surprised at the quality of these photographs by Mike Davis, as I had never been so impressed by his work in magazines as by some other photographers. Seen in the mass, however, it is far more impressive, and on the whole I would say this book is just about the best collection of Royal Ballet photos yet published. Davis excels at the posed stage-shot, and many of the examples in this book are remarkably successful, not least in the manner in which they capture the atmosphere of both dancer and ballet.

One of the difficulties of any picture book is to provide an interesting text. In place of the usual captions and general supporting material, Davis has gathered together a star-studded list of writers (Frederick Ashton, Mary Clarke, Pigeon Crowle, Margaret Dale, Noël Goodwin, Arnold Haskell and Peter Williams) to provide a series of essays on differing aspects of the Royal Ballet organisation, the resulting text being of infinitely more interest than that usually found in such books. Especially notable among the essays is Frederick Ashton's reflection "On Being a Choreographer".

My enthusiasm for the book would have been unbounded had the publishers — or perhaps Mr. Davis himself — taken more care in the book's production. The layout is often unimaginative and not infrequently vulgar. At times it looks distressingly like one of those pre-war film fan annuals with its crowded pages and corny cut-out photographs. An even more distressing feature is the number of photos that have been marred by clumsy bleeding. On page 17, for example, there is an unusually beautiful picture of Violetta Elvin, yet both her fingers and one of her points have been cut off by the block-maker, and this fault is found in about ten other pictures. Another fault is that some of the blocks appear to have been over-inked, but despite these blemishes the album will make an excellent exchange for any of your post-Christmas book-tokens.

C. B.

THE ROYAL BALLET IN PERFORMANCE AT COVENT GARDEN by John Hart (Faber & Faber, 36s.).

THE ROYAL BALLET TODAY by Cyril Swinson (A. & C. Black, 7s. 6d.).

FOR three illustrated books to come out within a few days of each other and all about the same company, must constitute some sort of a record. John Hart, who is the company's ballet master, supplements his text with over two hundred of his own photographs — and who, one asks, has a better chance of taking them than he? Many of them are exceptionally fine, though a little more selection would have been to the advantage of the book as a whole. The period spanned is a rather short one, limited no doubt by the time since Hart first possessed a camera, but many of the pictures are far better than those taken by photographers called in professionally, and this is particularly noticeable in the case of Cranko's *The Prince of the Pagodas*. Altogether it makes a lavish and beautifully produced record of Royal Ballet activities over the past three years, but a rather expensive one considering it only concerns such a fraction of the company's history.

Cyril Swinson's book, for A. & C. Black, is certainly cheaper and is the 14th volume in their "Dancers of Today" series — in this case about 33 dancers of today plus pictures of a great many more. It reads, and looks like, the back pages in any company's souvenir

album. But if the book has no particular aesthetic value, many of the pictures being postage stamp size, it has obvious value as a work of reference. Readers should be warned, however, that, the world moving as fast as it does these days, the volume may soon be out of date — dancers may leave and other names promoted — and it would seem that the work should be revised every year. On the whole I don't find this a very notable addition to an otherwise wholly admirable inexpensive series. The jacket is not at all indicative of the company's high standards.

P. W.

Thirty years of ballet-going

BALLET OF 3 DECADES by Audrey Williamson (Rockliff, 25s.).

THIS is Audrey Williamson's fourth book on ballet, and her first since the revised edition of *The Art of Ballet* in 1953. In the present book she discusses the whole period of her ballet-going, from her first visits as a schoolgirl in 1931 up to the present day. She starts with memories of Pavlova and covers everything of importance that has happened in ballet in Britain in the present century, except, of course, the Diaghilev company. In this new book she takes a far more objective approach to her subject than in her previous works. She is, for example, very well worth reading on the Bolshoi *Romeo and Juliet*.

The book's major fault is the absence of balance with which she approaches each of her decades. The middle decade, including the war years and just after, seems to be picked out in a good deal more detail than the somewhat impressionist technique applied to its neighbours. There is also much to be desired in way of emphasis — for example she devotes more space to Helpmann's short-lived ballet *Adam Zero* than to the whole of London's Festival Ballet, or the entire post-war achievements and history of the Ballet Rambert. Yet if a writer is not to be allowed prejudices and hobby-horses in writing a personal account where should we all be? But whether other people will find them illuminating is rather another matter.

C. B.

Mr. Pepys also studied this

The English Dancing Master, by John Playford. A facsimile reprint with an introduction, bibliography and notes by Margaret Dean-Smith. (Schott, 42s.).

THE little work was originally published in 1651, it was studied by Samuel Pepys, and it went through innumerable editions up to 1728. It later appeared in a modern reprint in 1933 when Leslie Bridgewater and Hugh Mellor edited it with the tunes set in modern notation, but this went rapidly out of print. Much of the present revival of English country dances is due to Playford's original compilation. This new edition therefore fills a need for students and folk dancers.

E. C. M.

STARS AT A PUBLISHER'S PARTY: Alicia Markova and Margot Fonteyn study the special leather-bound volumes of Mike Davis's book on the Royal Ballet which were presented to them at the party given by the Oldbourne Press to celebrate the book's publication.



NEW RECORDS

Reviewed by DAVID HUNT

Stravinsky and Bartok

Stravinsky: *The Firebird Suite. Fireworks.*
Bartok: *The Miraculous Mandarin* — Suite. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Fernando Previtali). HMV CLP 1224. 12 in. 35s. 10d.

THE rather colourless recording is only partly to blame for the dull impression these performances make. Previtali's treatment of *The Firebird Suite* shows little of the imaginative insight of Giulini's Columbia recording, while the suite from Bartok's ballet cannot compare, for savage intensity, with Dorati's version on Mercury, which includes the episode involving the penniless youth, here omitted.

Nor is the performance of Stravinsky's early *Fireworks* a satisfactory substitute for the composer's own recording, now deleted. It was this work which first attracted Diaghilev's attention to Stravinsky and it was later included in the company's repertoire, the music being "illustrated" by a geometric setting by the Cubist painter Ballo, which was lit according to a complicated lighting plot devised and worked by Diaghilev himself.

Meyerbeer and Massenet

Meyerbeer arr. Lambert: *Les Patineurs.*
Massenet: *Le Cid* — Ballet Music. Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (Jean Martinon). Decca Monaural LXT 5456; Stereo SXL 2021. 12 in. 39s. 11½d.

IRVING'S identical Decca coupling of this music has been deleted in the cause of stereo — though his two performances are still to be had on separate 10 in. discs. Solti's new performance of the Massenet dances (choreographed some years back by Celia Franca for Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet as *Ballemos*) has rather more to offer in the way of southern languor and temperamental dash, but his account of *Les Patineurs* has little of the intimate glow and charm of the Irving.

Most of the tempi are impossibly wrong — danced to such a sluggish accompaniment, the opening ensemble would dispel

any illusion of skating, and the whirlwind speeds adopted for such sections as the *Redowa* ensemble dance (No. 4) and the Finale merely evoke a mental picture of the dancers tumbled breathlessly on the "ice", praying for the curtains to come down.

So far as the recording is concerned, the sound on the monaural edition has a cold, steely brilliance which no amount of top-cut can entirely correct. The stereo version is greatly superior, with a warmer and more life-like quality of string tone, as well as the intriguing positioning of instruments made possible by the new medium — such effects as the separation of trumpets, horns and flutes in the opening fanfares of the Blue Boy's *Pas Seul* momentarily persuading one to accept the performance on its own terms as something quite apart from the ballet.

Peter Ustinov and the Wolf

Prokofiev: *Peter and the Wolf.* Haydn: *Toy Symphony.* Peter Ustinov (narrator), Philharmonia Orchestra (Herbert von Karajan). Columbia 33CX 1559. 41s. 8½d.

THEORETICALLY, *Peter and the Wolf* has no need of visual illustration, yet the most successful of several ballets based on it — Frank Staff's — could always be counted on to bring down the house at children's matinées.

Whether in the concert hall, the theatre or on a record, a successful performance depends largely on the narrator, who must be able to find exactly the right voice for the story-teller, Peter, Grandfather, the Bird, the Wolf and the rest, while avoiding all trace of coyness or self-consciousness.

Peter Ustinov is, surprisingly, far from being the ideal choice: only occasionally does he shake off his apparent embarrassment and enter into the spirit of the piece — for the most part he sounds as if he were wilting under the combined smirk of the entire Philharmonia and recording staff. The orchestra's contribution can hardly be faulted, but that is — literally — only half the story. What is missing is the twinkle in

the voice that Walter Gore never failed to provide in his telling of the tale for Ballet Rambert performances of Staff's ballet. Perhaps he could be persuaded to record the work.

The *Toy Symphony*, attributed to Haydn on the sleeve and label but now known to be by Leopold Mozart, is given a sprightly performance and the recording on both sides is impeccable.

Toyshop in Stereo

Rossini-Respighi: *La Boutique Fantasque.* Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Sir Eugene Goossens). HMV Monaural BLP 1104; Stereo BSD 752. 10 in. 30s. 11½d.

THIS new *Boutique* offers strong competition to Solti's Decca version, the only previous recording to give the complete score, though Ansermet's slightly abridged account, now available on the Ace of Clubs label at 22s. 6d., remains the best buy.

Goossens, like Ansermet a former Diaghilev conductor, conveys more of the ballet's atmosphere than does Solti. Tempi are beautifully judged in the new performance, the Galop, taken at Respighi's metronome marking, producing a much more exhilarating effect than at the slower speed adopted by Solti.

The recording, rich, full and immediate on the monaural edition, has a more backward perspective in its stereo form, the difference being more or less that between what one would hear with one ear from the front stalls and with two ears from the dress circle.

Offenbach Abridged

Offenbach arr. Rosenthal: *Gaité Parisienne* — excerpts. Rossini: *William Tell* — *Passo a tre*; *Coro tirolese.* Gounod: *Faust* — Ballet Music. Philharmonia Orchestra (Herbert von Karajan). Columbia 33CX 1588. 12 in. 41s. 8½d.

WHY is it that the record catalogues are positively bulging with fine performances of Johann Strauss's dance music, while all that can be had of Offenbach's equally irresistible waltzes, marches, quadrilles and mazurkas is contained in this much-recorded blatant arrangement by Rosenthal for Massine's *Gaité Parisienne*?

The reason has probably much to do with the fact that, whereas the Viennese take proper pride in the artistic heritage from their great past, the French tend to be increasingly concerned with the pursuit of the latest novelties.

This new Columbia disc offers on one side an abridged *Gaité* that takes in all the main highlights. All but seven of the score's 23 numbers are included, the only really regrettable omission being the Mazurka of the Cocodettes and their partners, though the rather hefty cut made in the Soldiers' Dance counts as a more jarring abridgement.

With its accent on tonal sumptuousness rather than sparkle, the performance strikes me as a somewhat heavy-weight romp, and Karajan's *schmalz-y* way with the waltzes suggests that he is oblivious of the stylistic gulf that separates Parisian and Viennese 19th-century light music. The Hollywood Bowl Orchestra's complete performance on Capitol has far more of the authentic spirit.

In terms of actual playing time, however, the Columbia offers better value, the second side including as it does the whole of the *Walpurgisnacht* rout from *Faust*, as well as a substantial slice of the delectable *William Tell* ballet music.



S K A T E R S :

Decca's new

recording of the

Meyerbeer-Lam-

bert music for

Ashton's Les

Patineurs has on

the sleeve this

photograph, by

Roger Wood, of

the Royal Ballet

production, show-

ing Brian Shaw

as the Blue

Skater.



Illustration 56

(a) Ballottés en avant and en arrière.

STEPS OF THE DANCE 36

by

BARBARA
VERNON

and

JOHN
GREGORY

Illustrated by EILEAN PEARCEY

Centre-Work : ALLEGRO—cont.

BALLOTTE : A smooth rocking or tossing movement with a well-sprung jump from one leg to the other. With a spring into the air from the 5th position, the working leg opens with a smoothly drawn out *développé* to the extended position *en l'air*, while the other leg lands softly with a feeling of deep pressure into the floor. Without *ballon* this step is unthinkable. With the *développé*, the body tips backwards or forwards in contramovement. It is seen to best advantage in the *effacé* positions.

BALLOTTE EN AVANT : Standing in 4th position *en croisé*, back leg *pointe tendu*; front arm rounded in 2nd position; other arm in 4th position. *Plié* on front leg, lifting back leg with knee bent to *passé* position; spring up from front leg to land on back leg opening front leg with a high *développé* to *effacé* front; at the same time changing arms, front arm travelling to 4th position; and 4th position arm to the 2nd position.

BALLOTTE EN ARRIERE : Continuing from the *Ballotte en avant*, spring up from supporting leg, bringing the extended *effacé* leg into the knee and down to the floor to land *en plié*, as the back leg coming up to the knee unfolds into *arabesque*. The arms travel bouyantly back in synchronisation with the jump; 2nd position arm to 5th position back, front arm rounded in 2nd position.

PAS DE CHAT (Italian and French style) : Often used in *Allegro enchainements*. It has a light sharp quality in the spring, and a soft subtle alighting, like the melting movement of a cat, from whom it takes its name. It travels to the side, or *en diagonal*, and may also be performed circularwise. From 5th position *en plié* the back leg is picked up with bent knee, tip of toe coming to the height of supporting knee; with a push from the floor, front leg is picked up to follow after the back leg which lands *en plié*, the front leg closing 5th position front *en plié*, immediately after it. The arms may be carried in a variety of ways. In our school the forward arm will open to 2nd position, the other arm to 4th position, and the head will look over the forward shoulder. In the

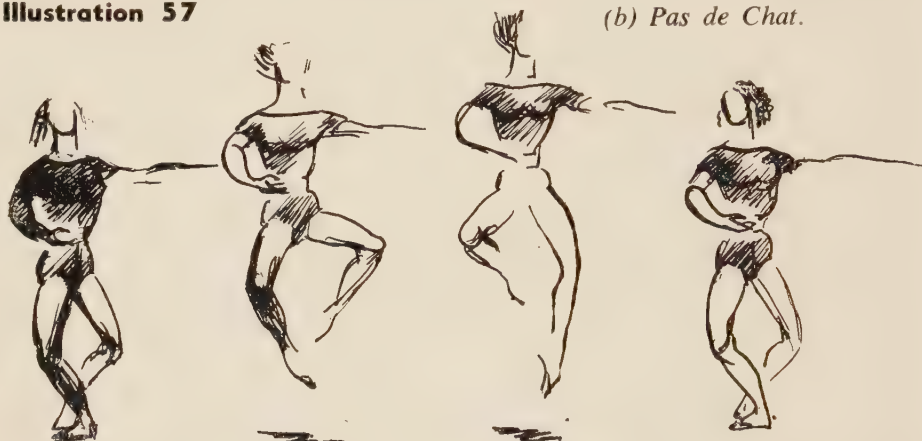
Italian school the arms will be exactly reversed, and the head will look in the direction of travel. The arms may also be taken up to 3rd position, or carried *à la Espagnol*: forward arm in 3rd, other arm in 2nd position.

PAS DE CHAT (Russian style) : A full description and illustration of the Russian

Pas de Chat will be found in Article No. 26. It is often used in *Allegro* and in *Grands Sautés*. It may commence from 5th position or 4th position; more breadth being obtained from the latter. From 5th position *en croisé*, arms in 1st position; *plié*, and brush back leg *en l'air* with half bent knee. With push from the floor spring forwards in

Illustration 57

(b) Pas de Chat.



the air, throwing front leg back *en l'air* to pass the other leg, also with slightly bended knee. Landing is made on the leg which was first thrown in the air; the other leg follows passing through 1st position *en plié* to the 4th position. The arms are thrown (they should float) forwards and upwards in the direction of the jump. The rear arm is

carried higher than the front arm, which is below the level of the chest. The torso is nicely arched.

This step will be easier to achieve for beginners if it is thought of basically as a run in which the legs are thrown well up behind.

Continued on page 28

Illustration 58

(c) Grand Pas de Chat en tournant (read from right to left).



STEPS OF THE DANCE

Continued from page 27

GRAND PAS DE CHAT EN TOURNANT: A step not much used, but nevertheless effective. It is the same movement as the Italian *Pas de Chat*, taken straight upwards with the body revolving towards the back leg. The arms are carried up to 3rd position. This step is much facilitated if taken from 4th position *en croisé*. The head is used as in *pirouette en l'air*.

COUPE FOUETTE EN ARABESQUE: It is pleasing in *Allegro* to give breadth and change of direction. *Coupé Fouetté* usually follows a *Tombé en effacé*. From the 4th position front leg *en plié* (forward arm in 2nd position, other arm in 4th position) *coupé* with back leg in 5th position behind;

with spring from *coupé* the front leg is thrown straight out to the *effacé en l'air*. At the height of the jump the body turns sharply in the air away from the working leg which becomes *en arabesque* as the landing is made. The arms are lifted slightly with the jump, and the change of the body reverses their positions.

EXAMPLES OF ALLEGRO ENCHAÎNEMENTS INCORPORATING BALLOTTES AND PAS DE CHATS ETC.

	Counts
1. <i>Glissade derrière</i>	And 1,
<i>Ballotté en avant</i>	" 2,
<i>Ballotté en arrière</i>	" 3,
<i>Pas de Bourrée dessous</i> (under)	" 4.
Repeat on other side.	
2. <i>Pas de Chat</i> (French style)	" 1,

	Counts
<i>Sisol derrière</i>	And 2,
<i>Pas de Basque en arrière</i> to	
4th position	" 3,
<i>Jeté en avant en croisé</i>	" 4.
Repeat on other side.	
3. <i>Sisol Tombé en avant en effacé</i>	" 1,
<i>Coupé Fouetté</i>	" 2,
<i>Pas de Basque en arrière</i> to	
4th position	" 3,
<i>Soutenu en tournant en dedans</i>	
with front leg	" 4.
Repeat on other side.	
4. <i>Glissade derrière</i>	" 1,
<i>Ballotté en arrière</i>	" 2,
<i>Ballotté en avant</i>	" 3,
<i>Jeté en avant</i>	" 4,
<i>Failli</i>	" 5.
Repeat same way <i>en diagonal</i> .	

Dance and Dancers

THE ROYAL BALLET (II) at Covent Garden

Rare one-act programmes

THE LADY AND THE FOOL, revived on November 4, is one of those near misses. It has all the makings of a splendid work yet it remains dreadfully superficial. Ronald Hynd has now taken over the rôle of one of the two clowns, Moondog, and gives a most intelligent performance — much more the sort of clown in the Debureau-Marcel Marceau class, and he has added a few little personal touches. Hynd's old rôle of the Prince of Arroganza is now played with nobility by Derek Rencher. A slight tendency to strain was about the only fault I could see in Rencher's interpretation, and when he learns to relax in the rôle he should be as distinguished as his predecessor.

MacMillan's *Agon* in the same programme had Merle Park in the Anya Linden rôle. She is a fine dancer and has meticulously grasped the score's complications but just lacks the *chic* which it would seem is here essential. As her partner, Desmond Doyle was competent, but neither he nor his predecessor, Blair, really manage to leave much impression.

Ronald Hynd, starring in all three ballets that evening, partnered Nerina in *The Firebird*, which ended the programme. If he lacked the bumpkin aristocracy of Some's as Ivan Tsarevitch, he in no way let the ballet down and when he has had a chance of considering this very complex part in greater detail he should be able to bring his own distinction to one of Some's best characteristics. Nerina was a dazzlingly flashing Firebird and now gives far greater depth to her portrayal.

P. W.

THE pattern which has clearly emerged from the Covent Garden winter season is of a predominantly full-length design. Perhaps it is just absence making the heart grow fonder, but I have found the modern repertory evenings this season unusually attractive. The programme on November 13 which gave us MacMillan's *Noctambules*, Ashton's *Rinaldo* and *Armida* and Massine's *Mam'zelle Angot* proved exceptionally well balanced and, as a consequence, entertaining.

Noctambules is not perhaps MacMillan's best ballet — its Svengali theme and Caligari treatment are perhaps too diffuse, yet its atmosphere is marvellously sustained and the choreography is imaginative and ingenious. It is a good ballet containing fitful flashes of brilliance, which suddenly illuminate certain passages — such as the

tremendously effective ending — and highlight them against the rest.

The ballet revived splendidly. The cast was much the same as on the ballet's first production nearly three years ago, the only significant difference being the appearance of Shirley Grahame in Anya Linden's original rôle of the Poor Girl. Grahame, suavely partnered by Desmond Doyle, danced with her characteristic smoothness, showing once again an effortless way of moulding a dance phrase so that each individually articulated movement flows one into another like the notes in a singer's vocal line. This is a rare gift — Shaw has it to a conspicuous extent — and one which holds out great promise for her future. On the other hand she was unable to give the part either the rapt innocence of Linden or the tenderness of Page, even though she danced it better than both.

Leslie Edwards's Hypnotist remains a conscientious characterisation, yet lacking in stage magnetism. Edwards is an artist second to none in the country, but this very difficult leading rôle needs a commanding stage presence for which no amount of artistry is any substitute. When, on the afternoon of November 22, the part was taken for the first time by Ronald Hynd the whole ballet fell into sharper focus. In its parts Hynd's performance was not so well calculated as Edwards's, but in the sum of those parts it proved far more effective. Hynd needs to synchronise his gestures better with the music, and his handling of the mirrors, which are intended to flash demonic light through the auditorium, had none of the hysterical fervour successfully suggested by Edwards, yet Hynd dominated the work and made the Hypnotist credibly compelling.

Maryon Lane's Hypnotist's Assistant remains as remarkable as ever — a wonder-creation that deserves a place in English ballet history. Doreen Wells, in the second cast, danced extraordinarily well and acted intelligently, giving a performance that was acceptable even after Lane's.

Nadia Nerina's Faded Beauty had many moments of exultation, but Annette Page, at the later performance, remained obstinately faded. This, however, was probably only a temporary lapse, as previously she has danced extremely well in this rôle. Although Shaw acts with absolute conviction as the Soldier — the shambling diffidence of his entrance is compellingly done — dance-wise his portrayal is not so happy. Curiously enough MacMillan does not seem to have got hold of Shaw's very individual style, and, just as in *Solitaire*, the dancer seems ill at ease, like a man wearing the wrong tie

with the right suit.

Mam'zelle Angot is rather a silly work, and although it has a few of the qualities of a vintage Massine, it seems hardly short of tragic that this watered-down example should be the only work of that master choreographer left in the Royal Ballet repertory. Its present revival of *Mam'zelle Angot* might be termed good plain home cooking. The quartet of principals was as well danced as I can recall, but quite a lot of the ballet's general detailing, although diligently reconstructed, lacked something of the style which Massine himself might have reproduced, had he been responsible for the revival.

Nadia Nerina's coarse and racy *Mam'zelle Angot* proved delicious in its warm-hearted vulgarity. She has never been better in it, nor for that matter has Alexander Grant as the tow-headed Barber bouncing out his joy and anguish with jaunty rectitude, his facial grimaces alternating between sad clownishness and the sunny grin of an urchin.

The two newcomers to the quartet were both welcome additions. Gary Burne danced the Caricaturist with cheeky impudence; the spring of his jump and flourish of his personality suited the choreography and he handled the difficult — and rather ungainly — partnering with notable aplomb. Shirley Grahame delicately picked her way through the part of the Aristocrat in a characterisation that could be more sharply etched yet was still adequate.

The ballet gives moderate opportunities for character sketches, and the best of these — the decaying Chief of Police — was seized upon by Stanley Holden with endearing whimsicality.

At a later performance — December 3 — *Mam'zelle Angot* was taken by Maryon Lane, dancing and acting with great charm and vivacity, yet not projecting quite well enough. Much the same could be said of Brenda Taylor's Aristocrat. Here, although the dancing was a little suspect, the air of genteel refinement she brought to the part neatly pointed the supposed "Aristocrat" who started low enough down the social scale to go to school with *Mam'zelle Angot* — an aspect of the characterisation most of the interpreters have forgotten.

Rinaldo and *Armida* was originally revived last summer during the height of the ballet boom, when even our usually accommodating pages were too crowded to review it. The ballet has worn extremely well since its first production four years ago. When it was given then I remember it being received, for the most part, with the same mildly disapproving apathy that greets most

of the Ashton ballets that are not actually damned out-of-hand. It is rather amusing to hear and see the number of second thoughts that are now cropping up. This gentle, lyrical work with its simple theme of the enchantress enchanted, has always been a good ballet, the more so since a couple of years ago when Ashton changed the ending, so that Rinaldo — despite the programme which quaintly still refuses to register the choreographic change — no longer "flees in terror". Both Svetlana Beriosova and Michael Somes gave assured performances, Beriosova in particular successfully exploring the emotional responses of this ice-cold seductress who eventually loves to death. Somes showed a fine ardour, but his characterisation — and the fault is partly Ashton's — remains doggedly two-dimensional.

Two Giselles

The programme on November 21 opened with an agonising performance of *Agon*. Almost, but far from quite, impeccably danced, the ballet was frigidly received by a group of plush-sitters who all too plainly saw it chiefly as a distraction between themselves and their beloved *Giselle*. At the end of this wonderfully inventive ballet limped haltingly to a total of two calls, before the house lights doused the audience's wild apathy. It was the ballet's 10th performance, and it would be a brave man to say it was not going to be the last — no more performances are announced. However, even if *Agon* is never seen again, it might be salutary for its attackers to remember that Nijinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* only achieved a total of four performances in London — which is surprising considering the number of people who seem to have seen it.

If one is to believe the programme, and I rarely do, it was the 151st performance of *Giselle* that night. Sitting in a box, getting a preview of Nerina's *Giselle*, was her Russian TV partner, Nicolai Fadeychev. Possibly spurred on by the thought of keeping up with those Bolshoi Jones's, the entire company — who all seemed very well aware of the visiting dance potentate — danced and acted with the zest of an English soccer team playing the Russians at Wembley. In every way, except one, it was a magical evening.

There are faults which could be found in Nerina's first act *Giselle*. Certainly she is not the best actress we have ever seen, yet her portrayal is full of very carefully thought out touches conveyed with simple sincerity. Even if to me she is not always subjectively convincing, I must at the same time admit to seeing no objective reason for this. Her dancing in this first act was light, fanciful and brilliant, but it was in the second that it really came into its own. Here she produced a superlative performance which I have hardly ever seen equalled. Perhaps it lacked something of the *mystique* of a great *Giselle*, yet on its own level it was unsurpassable, carrying all doubts away with its perfection of movement. I feel it would take very little — some greater degree of involvement, perhaps, or some surer sense of communication — to tip this performance into one about which there could be no reservations whatsoever.

Michael Somes's Albrecht had nobility without stuffiness — an excellent *danseur noble* performance, completely sure in style and bearing, which did not concern itself overmuch with such dramatic niceties as the ambiguity of Albrecht's actions. He approached the rôle, as is valid, purely as an essay in period style. His dancing has fallen off slightly during the past year; he can still make much the same effects but

only at the cost of greater effort. Yet this remains a fine Albrecht, and I was particularly taken by his interpolation of a mimed cry for assistance at the end of the ballet.

Shirley Grahame has gained in authority as Myrthe since her first performance last summer, while her dancing is as finely executed as ever. Annette Page and Pirmin Trecu danced the peasant *pas de deux* with an unusually elegant regard for the Romantic period. Desmond Doyle showed improvement as Wilfred, while Franklin White's Hilarion had been well-considered.

Apart from individual performances there was the *corps de ballet* dancing at the peak of its form. In the last act particularly it impressed me perhaps more than ever before. The improvement here over the last couple of years is wonderfully gratifying. It is fast developing that corporate spirit that distinguished the Bolshoi *corps*. It was altogether a performance of unexpected distinction.

The sad aspect is that we persist in giving such an inferior production of the ballet, and the orchestra, at this performance, played shamefully under Kenneth Alwyn.

The orchestra — this time under Hugo Rignold — was the most common factor between this *Giselle* and Beriosova's on the afternoon of November 22; in fact, it was more than common, it was practically vulgar. Turning to happier things, what a contrast there is between Beriosova's *Giselle* and Nerina's. In the first act Beriosova has it all her own way — with her subtly shaded acting that practically compels belief. In the second act — at least at these performances — the tables were turned. Beriosova slipped into one of her remote keys — which she does occasionally — and the outline of her dancing appeared fuzzy after Nerina's of the previous evening. Beriosova seems in an unpredictable mood at present, and performance is varying from performance far more than is either desirable or customary.

Bryan Ashbridge has settled down completely as her partner, and is already beginning to give her more assistance than any of her previous partners. His acting and double-work are commendably forthright, and he has developed an unobtrusive but confident stage presence. At this performance he danced with an easy elegance, his most serious technical fault being a tendency to crouch slightly in *pirouettes*, which causes his travelling leg to be raised awkwardly. He should also try to make his preparations for steps less obvious. His make-up is also almost invariably too pale, but all these are tiny points easily sorted out.

While the *corps de ballet* was not quite so effective as on the previous evening, the soloist rôles were brilliantly taken. Margaret Hill (Myrthe), Leslie Edwards (Hilarion), Derek Rencher (Wilfred) were all exemplary, and Lane and Shaw in the peasant *pas de deux* seemed even better than usual. Shaw is now going from strength to strength, and his dancing is a joy for connoisseur and newcomer alike. C. B.

R.A.D. GALA MATINEE

A MID-WEEK gala matinee, with tickets up to 10 guineas, is pleasantly evocative of a leisured past. Even the programme with its art paper, gilt printing and golden tassels reminded us of a less austere and more glamorous age. This performance, with its constellation of dancers, was put on at the London Coliseum on November 13 in aid of the Royal Academy of Dancing, and recalled the excitements of the Pavlova and

Hungarian galas of three years ago. However, it must be admitted that the programme was not quite so well chosen as for either of the earlier ventures.

The matinee opened well enough with a *divertissement* devised by Meriel Evans to Debussy's *Petite Suite* and performed by dancers drawn from the London Centre of the R.A.D. Scholars' Classes. The choreography looked musical and fluent, and cleverly geared to the abilities of both the elder and the younger students.

Ballet Rambert's contribution were the Doll-Dances from Act II of *Coppélia*, piquantly performed by Lucette Aldous and Norman Morrice. This, which gave unfeigned delight to Princess Anne, one of the Royal visitors, was nevertheless not quite the kind of item one expects from a Gala Performance.

Nor, for that matter, were the excerpts from *Ondine* presented by the Royal Ballet. The *Divertissement* from Act III is possibly — in theory, at least — suitable. It is self-contained and ought to be able to stand alone on its own merits. Unfortunately it is also perhaps the least rewarding section of Ashton's very wonderful choreography, and heard in isolation Henze's little piano concerto, to which it is set, sounded even more puerile than it does in the complete ballet. The usual cast, led by Lane and Shaw, worked hard to make it acceptable.

Even more disappointing was the great *pas de deux* from the first act of the same ballet which Ashton has devised for Fonteyn and Somes. Seen out of context, in front of drapes, this marvellous dance obstinately refused to come alive. It just is not the kind of ballet from which you can cut chunks and let them stand on their own as if they were something like the *Don Quixote pas de deux*. For all its beauty, I was so frightened by its lack of effectiveness that I was genuinely worried lest I had over-rated it, and carried a niggling fear around with me for days until I had seen it once more in the full glory of its right setting at the opera house.

Following this rather flat opening the whole performance flared into life with Gsovsky's *Grand Pas Classique*, wonderfully danced by Yvette Chauviré and Youly Algaroff. She danced like a creature inspired, with all the sophistication and good humour of French classical ballet at its best, adding to it that beautifully understated good taste that makes her so loved by her British audiences. Algaroff, although perhaps not now perhaps the dancer he was when he last appeared in England, partnered with a typically Gallic flourish and showed throughout a very justifiable pride in his ballerina.

The temperature zoomed down again immediately after the interval, when Kirsten Simone and Henning Kronstam gave the first British performance of the "Balcony" *pas de deux* from Ashton's Royal Danish version of *Romeo and Juliet*. Despite the efforts of these two fine dancers, the *pas de deux* proved as unhappy a choice as the excerpts from *Ondine*. It was all the more unfortunate as only a comparatively few people know the complete work in this country, and it gave a rather poor impression of its scope and beauty.

Mona Inglesby — who was making her stage comeback at this Matinee — chose a far more appropriate vehicle in "The Rose Adagio" from *The Sleeping Beauty*. Yet her dancing was so undistinguished that the wisdom of her choice became a somewhat negative virtue.

Antonio, the master showman of all dancers, can always be depended upon to produce just the right kind of piece for such



LYLIA: Rosemary Cockayne, Ludmila Mlada and Eileen Copley, as the three moods of Lylia in Colin Paterick's ballet for the Evening of Modern Dance at the Park Lane Theatre. Photo: Seymour Grey.

a party, and the fact that it never varies does not stop it from still being the right kind. He stamped his way through his *Zapateado* with all his customary fire and delicacy.

The one fault of Markova's appearance in the Taglioni Variation from Dolin's *The Pas de Quatre* was its brevity. We would have been prepared to have been delighted for far longer by this great artist who instinctively produces the Gala touch.

The programme was completed by Paddy Stone's new ballet, which was untitled during Festival Ballet's summer season, and now — the competition to find it a name having apparently produced no printable results — called by the title under which it originally went in Nervi, namely *Ocetto*. But the naming of roses does nothing to increase their scent, and *Ocetto* looks no better now than it did in its nameless past. Anita Landa, John Gilpin and their colleagues from Festival Ballet bounced through it with more verve than it deserved. Although the costumes were the same as those used at the Festival Hall when they were described as being by Jack Notman, the programme now describes them as the work of André Levasseur. Is this some new kind of competition? C. B.

BALLET RAMBERT

ALTHOUGH the Ballet Rambert has one of the most rewarding repertoires in the world today, the amount that it is permitted to show on its tours seems to reflect sadly on the tastes of provincial audiences, or, more likely, on the tastes of provincial theatre managements, who seem to imagine that the public wants little more than a staple diet of well-loved, and at times well-worn, "classics". How tragic it is that the Rambert Company has this precious cargo of Tudor ballets, for example, and yet can only present them for two performances each year in London.

One of the principal interests of the company's week's season at the Golder's Green Hippodrome opening on November 17 was the revival of *Façade* on November 19.

Although this is described as "the Original Version", choreographically it varies little from that given by the Royal Ballet. Of course, it still uses the first of John Armstrong's settings and costumes

that were originally designed for the Camargo Society and were also used by the Royal Ballet until it was lost in their disastrous visit to the Low Countries in 1940.

The present performance was notable chiefly for the Debutante and Dago of Gillian Martlew and John Chesworth. Martlew, looking as if she had made her debut some time previously, danced with a certain world-weary wariness that implied a young lady who might have known the score had she only learnt to count.

Chesworth — improved from when I saw him last summer — suggested a very seedy Dago, almost doomed to failure, yet determined to do his best.

Norman Dixon and Norman Morrice in the dead-pan Popular Song clearly evoked that sense of dancing on the end of a pier which the choreography calls for, and June Sandbrook made an appealing Milkmaid. Lucette Aldous was less secure in the Polka than I would have expected.

A sad factor in this performance was the playing of the orchestra under David Ellenberg, which at times contrived — and I am not exaggerating — to make parts of Walton's music nearly unrecognisable. The orchestra fared little better in *Les Sylphides*, where Beryl Goldwyn, Norman Dixon, Gillian Martlew and Lucette Aldous met the demands of Fokine's atmospheric romanticism with varying degrees of success. Most impressive was the *pas de deux*, eloquently danced by Goldwyn and Dixon.

The rest of the programme was completed by two of Rambert's best post-war ballets, *Laidereffe* and *Two Brothers*. The first, danced to a somewhat worn recording that is now of almost actionably low-fidelity, lacked quite a lot in definition. *Two Brothers*, on the other hand, seemed even better than during the past London season, and emphasised that Norman Morrice's debut as a choreographer is as distinguished as any since MacMillan's. C. B.

AN EVENING OF MODERN DANCE

Given by the Related Arts Centre, at the Park Lane Theatre on November 28, 29, 30.

WHETHER let loose this collection of modern dancers at the Park Lane

Theatre? There was certainly no shortage of variety, but much of the dancing was spoilt by excruciatingly bad stage conditions. One work opened with a furious dancer doing *jetés* on a pitch dark stage. Another dancer lost her head when blacked-out in the middle of a solo and screamed hysterically "Lights, please" more than once, only to be told by a technician at the back of the auditorium to start again, please. The voice of a frantic stage manager could be heard over the sound system, and when the curtains worked on cue the audience gave a riotous cheer of appreciation.

Latecomers walked about until an angry critic bellowed, "Could someone please close the doors?", and a stray pedestrian even walked across the stage before another number. After one hitch when the curtains closed in emergency, two dancers came out in front of the footlights and, as an interlude, put their foreheads on the floor, and with bottoms touching like book-ends waited for order to be restored.

Reading the titles of the works and the sources of material — Impressions of Angels based on Medieval Manuscripts, Medieval Pilgrim's Ballad, an Ancient Greek Hymn, and Egypt 2000 B.C. — one can be forgiven for putting the question: "How modern is British modern dance?" It rather looks as if it has its head buried in the sand, and is retreating to blissful pre-war years; dancing beautifully to forget today's realities.

The opening item, *Abstract Dance* by Hilde Holger, was quite striking. This choreographer eschews the soloist to concentrate on group patterns. Some of her work is original, fairly musical, but, regrettably, her dancers vary so greatly in quality (and size) that they are unable to do her works full justice.

The only dance by Lilian Harmel that I would care to see again is her *Passion de Doux Jesus*, which is impressive and moving in its simplicity. Her other items were marred by an unsteadiness of technique and some uncertainty, forcing her to skate precariously through the more difficult technical passages.

Jane Winearls' *Salle d'Attente* was strictly contemporary, with an assortment of people, refugees and the like, "waiting for Godot" at some sort of transport terminal anywhere in Europe. It was brimming with ideas, the music was interesting, most of it was acted rather than danced, and there was much hurry and bustle. But the tiny stage was cluttered with too many characters, giving the work a disorganised air.

Ludmila Mlada's solos, *Gabriel* and *Lucifer*, were danced with a sincerity and a professional technique — qualities largely absent in other items. In addition to her, the only individual dancers who stood out were Eileen Copley, Richard Brown and Rosemary Cockayne.

The best of the works, Colin Paterick's *Lylia*, was so much above the standard of everything else seen, not only in this programme, but in modern dance generally, that it demands a review to itself.

Lylia

Choreography, Colin Paterick. Music, Britten. Words spoken by the choreographer.

My Wife, Lylia:

In childish and playful mood

ROSEMARY COCKAYNE

In seductive mood EILEEN CROPLEY

In enigmatic mood LUDMILA MLADA

COMPARED with the usual fare of modern dance — the Teutonic dance macabre of doom and gloom — this work

DANCE AND DANCERS

let in great draughts of wit and sophistication. The final result showed that, in their opposite ways, there is little more than a pair of shoes separating modern dance and a good classical ballet which uses a contemporary theme. One hopes that this work will be presented again somewhere — perhaps at the Sunday Ballet Club?

Paterick's uncanny stagecraft made up for a total absence of décor. We see a dimly lit stage with an armchair near the prompt corner facing upstage. Most of the dancing is orientated towards the imaginary husband

in the chair and is thus on a diagonal plane. Sometimes the work is danced in silence after a solo voice introduction — for the remainder the choreographer has used Britten. The choreography is always appropriate and is worked out in soft plastic movements in harmony with the long costumes.

We hear a voice saying something like: "Lylia is my wife. Sometimes when I look at her, I think I have married three wives. Sometimes she is playful and childish." Rosemary Cockayne then dances the Wife

in childish mood with sparkling freshness. Exit. "Sometimes she is seductive." Eileen Cropley comes on in an identical costume, and with much glamour, warmth and fluidity of style, depicts Lylia at her most bewitching. "Sometimes she is moody and enigmatic." Ludmila Mlada appears, again in identical costume, and suggests this facet of the Wife's character with finely controlled facial expression.

Then the three aspects merge together, only to resume their original moods. It was a very plausible and original work.

E. C. M.

Dance and Dancers

AMERICA

NEW YORK CITY BALLET

THE second part of New York City Ballet's 10th Anniversary Year Celebration is now under way at the New York City Center. Premiered too late for review in this issue were three important new works: *The Seven Deadly Sins*, the Balanchine-Brecht-Kurt Weill collaboration; *Medea*, choreographed by Birgit Cullberg to music of Béla Bartók; and *Octet*, with music by Igor Stravinsky, choreographed by William Christensen, head of the Ballet Department of the University of Utah.

HUROK RECEIVES CAPEZIO AWARD

IMPRESARIO Sol Hurok has been named recipient of the eighth Annual Capezio Dance Award and was cited "for his service

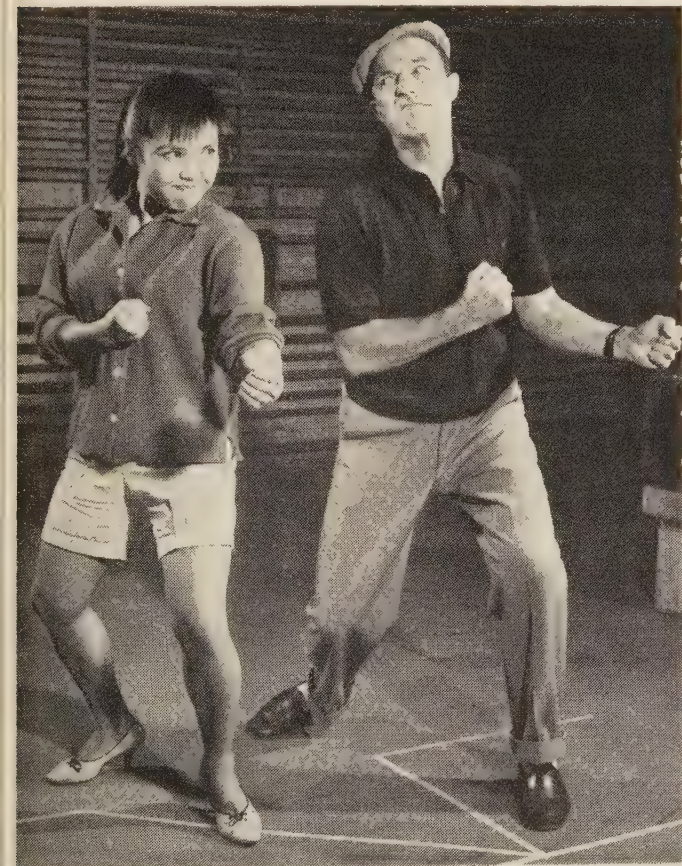
to dance as America's foremost impresario, who has transformed the term 'S. Hurok Presents' from a mere statement of management to a promise of adventure with the best in the performing arts and who has, through his presentations of all forms of dance, both resident and imported, aided immeasurably in building for America a vast and increasingly knowledgeable dance public."

In his four decades as an impresario, S. Hurok has presented, among others, the Royal Ballet, Alicia Markova, Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, Mary Wigman, Uday Shan-kar and Anna Pavlova. The Award Committee that honoured Hurok included Anatole Chujoy, Editor of *Dance News*; Emily Coleman, Dance Critic for *Newsweek* and *Theatre Arts*; Martha Hill, Director of the Dance Department, Julliard School of Music; and Walter Terry, Dance Critic of *The New York Herald-Tribune*. Previous Capezio Award winners have included

Alexandra Danilova, Ted Shawn, Doris Humphrey, Lincoln Kirstein, Genevieve Oswald, Louis Horst and Zachary Solov.

FIVE distinguished American dancers — Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Hanya Holm, Helen Tamiris and Charles Weidman — received Awards of Honour for their contribution to the development of an indigenous American art form — The Modern Dance. These awards were presented by John Martin, Dance Editor of *The New York Times*, on behalf of the Women's Division, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, sponsors of the Second International Festival of Dance. These awards were presented at a gala charity luncheon held in the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Astor and the following noted artists performed on the programme which followed: Nora Kaye and André Eglevsky, Valerie Bettis, Gemze de Lappe and Kelly Brown, Talley Beatty, Sophia

VETERANS AT WORK: Left, Gene Kelly, director of the musical *Flower Drum Song*, shows Pat Suzuki how to look fightin' mad in a Friedman-Abeles photograph. Right, Fred Astaire steps his way into television for the first time. For NBC Color Television he gave a full-hour show called "An Evening with Fred Astaire" which was enormously successful.





JEAN CEBRON : Three studies, by Radford Bascome, of the French modern dancer who is now appearing so successfully in America. He gave a number of recitals when he was studying in England and left a deep impression on all who saw him.

Delza, Carola Goya, Mara, Sophie Maslow and Shelson Ossosky, Mata and Hari and Massie Patterson and her Carib dancers. Helen Tamiris, dancer and choreographer of many Broadway musicals, was programme director of the Festival.

BERYOZKA DANCE COMPANY

PRESENTED by Sol Hurok, the famed Beryozka Russian Dance Company opened its first American engagement at the Broadway Theatre in New York prior to its national tour to such major cities as Washington, Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles. This was in accordance with the exchange agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union.

After saying that the girls are strikingly attractive and move beautifully, one must add that a whole evening of one level of dancing becomes, as John Martin put it in *The New York Times*, "Basically, it is rather like a whole evening with the Rockettes". Somehow, these dancers never seem to let go and explode, as it were, in performance as did their predecessors, the Moiseyev Folk Dance Company. Although Mme. Nadezhdina has developed both her company and their performance to a high degree of perfection, a whole evening programme becomes a bit tedious. Nevertheless, these charming dancers are indeed excellent ambassadors and it has been a pleasure to have them visit us. Memorable, especially, are their lovely opening number, "Beryozka," and the lyrical "Beryozka Waltz".

JEAN CEBRON

JEAN CEBRON, the noted European modern dancer, appeared recently in a

programme of dances at the YM-YWHA in New York City and immediately confirmed the fact that he is a dancer who can move magnificently. At this stage of his career, Jean Cebbron's dance powers and technique far outshadow his choreographic gifts and one wonders if he might not be infinitely more rewarding as a performer if he employed other choreographers or became associated with a specific company. In either case, he is still a remarkable dancer and he reminded this reviewer, at least, of José Limón when he began emerging so majestically on the American dance scene exactly twenty-five years ago.

DANCE ON TELEVISION

AFTER months of banality, dance on television in America has taken a decided upswing, chiefly because of the recent nation-wide broadcasts featuring Fred Astaire in his own one-hour programme and Alicia Markova as guest on the Victor Borge show.

Hailing this programme in *The New York Times*, Jack Gould, its Television Critic, reported: "He (Astaire) and his associates demonstrated unmistakably that the dance on TV can retain the loveliness, grace and intoxication of the art of pure movement." This was achieved chiefly for two reasons: Fred Astaire and his dancers rehearsed this programme for upwards of ten weeks; secondly, Hermes Pan, the choreographer, and David Rose, the conductor, aided tremendously in their contributions to the freshness, mobility and intimacy of this programme. Noteworthy, too, was Barrie Chase, Mr. Astaire's new partner, and the outstanding dance numbers included "Svengali", a group work with the star and a corps, "Man with the Blues" and "St.

James's Infirmary".

Now television viewers are awaiting the much-heralded Gene Kelly "Dance — A Man's Game" programme scheduled for a forthcoming Omnibus broadcast.

Arthur Todd.

FRANCE

THE PARIS OPERA

FOUNDED as a whim of Louis XIV, the Académie de Musique et de Danse remains faithful to its authoritarian origins. The capricious directorial officials continue to exert absolute power over the Opéra, which is unfortunate seeing that none of them can be considered to be "enlightened despots". Thus we have seen the successive departure of the two greatest French ballerinas, closely followed by that of their master, Serge Lifar. And at the end of a month of complete silence, we were suddenly informed that George Skibine had been appointed as Lifar's successor.

All one can do is to wish the creator of *Le Prisonnier du Caucase*, *Idylle* and *Concerto*, the best of luck. But it seems that he has taken a very heavy burden upon his shoulders. The enormous stage of the Opéra, and also the management of a company made more complicated by the recent addition of new blood, are two elements which are difficult to handle. Especially for one who scarcely knows their secrets and who has had no experience of this type of responsibility.

For instance, *Concerto* which was originally created at the Opéra-Comique, where it was an undoubted success has suffered through being transferred to the Opéra (an exceptional occasion), which demands something more breathtaking and

inspired. We await with great interest to see whether Skibine will pass his first tests. Undoubtedly he will do so in *Daphnis and Chloë*, the new production with décor by Chagall which has already been announced. In between two tours Lifar hurriedly arranged some of the choreography, but at one stage the work seemed to have been abandoned. Perhaps Skibine will arrange the also already announced *Othello*: another work to be added to the long list of Shakespearean ballets.

In Lifar's *Chemin de lumière*, Peter Van Dijk and Claire Motte are as outstanding as ever, while Jacqueline Rayet has danced with great mastery and elegance the rôle which was created by Claude Bessy.

Liane Daydé, Michel Renault, Marjorie Tallchief and Skibine left on November 12 with Espanita Cortez, Ninon Lebertre and Michel Rayne at the head of the *corps de ballet* of the Opéra-Comique, for Naples where they gave four performances at the San Carlo Theatre.

THE INTERNATIONAL BALLET OF THE MARQUIS DE CUEVAS

THE return of the De Cuevas company to the Théâtres des Champs-Élysées on October 28 took place without any spectacular incidents, and this time nothing disturbed the course of Lifar's *Noir et Blanc*. This work was far more polished than it was in 1957 and it has gained much by the stricter discipline John Taras has exerted over the company. All the principals, especially Melikova and Golovine, were outstanding. Due to Nina Vyroubova's absence through illness, Colette Marchand made a long-awaited comeback in the *pas de deux* and in the "flute" variation.

Sébastien was originally produced on October 31, 1944, and it formed part of the company's repertoire during its first Paris season at the Alhambra. This work, which had long been abandoned and forgotten, was revived by its choreographer, Edward Caton, with décors and costumes by Léonor Fini. However, the very melodious but over-simple score by Menotti does not always succeed in capturing the sombre magic of the scenario. Polajenko gives a discreet portrayal of the Moorish slave, Sébastien, who has a secret passion for the dazzling courtesan (Rosella Hightower). On the other hand, Wasil Tupin hardly corresponds to anyone's idea of a young Venetian prince.

Le Mal du Siècle by James Starbuck has the advantage of the indefatigable *brio* of Rosella Hightower. But it offers nothing new and cannot compare with the works of Jerome Robbins or Charnley's *Symphony for Fun*. We will therefore not linger over the trifle other than say that Alwyn Camble's costumes — sugar pink tights and men in brassieres — are in questionable taste.

As usual, the programmes contained classical and modern variations, and in these attention must be drawn to two exceptional interpretations. Though in fact she had hardly recovered, Nina Vyroubova, partnered by Serge Golovine, brought to the over-performed *Casse-Noisette pas de deux* an almost unparalleled brilliance. It is the mark of great artists that they are able to reveal in familiar pieces a whole universe which is generally unexplored by inferior dancers. Transcending technique, Nina Vyroubova has made of this variation, which so many dancers regard as a circus number, an unforgettable moment of great art.

Still with Golovine, but on this occasion accompanied by Rosella Hightower, she danced in a totally different work — Balanchine's discreet pastiche, the *Paquita pas de trois*, which has rarely been so magnificently performed.

While Jacqueline Moreau and Melikova alternated in Charrat's *Diagramme*, Rosella Hightower brought stern authority and coquetry to Act 2 of *Le Lac des Cygnes*. This choice was a mistake because the qualities of this ballerina bear no resemblance whatever to those required of Odette. In contrast, Nina Vyroubova lent a tragic charm to *Inès de Castro* which she danced once again with great sensitivity. She develops this rôle spontaneously from the timid tenderness of the beginning through to the mortal anguish and to the ending, when she is transformed into the richly decorated statue (the ikon). Her somewhat inexpressive partner, Polajenko, remains inferior to his predecessor, George Skibine.

Two new pieces figured in the programmes :

CAT'S CRADLE

Choreography, John Cranko. Music, John Addison. Costumes and décor by Desmond Heeley.

1. *Prelude et Valse de libération.*
2. *La femme et ses ombres.*
3. *La Rose.*
4. *Soleil et Orage.*
5. *Le Rideau.*
6. *Le tutu enchanté.*
7. *Romance.*
8. *Postlude.*

CAT'S CRADLE: Georges Goviloff (brother of Serge Golovine) with Génia Melikova in the ballet which John Cranko created for the de Cuevas ballet. John Addison's music was the same as that used by Walter Gore for his *Carte Blanche* at Sadler's Wells some years ago.



GENIA MELIKOVA
GEORGES GOVILOFF MAX ANDRE
and *corps de ballet*

THIS minor but unpretentious work was presented at the last minute at the first night gala and it probably did not deserve the severe reception it received. At least the dancers, especially its principals, gave it some distinction. Certainly this simple *divertissement* is not Cranko at his best. The main criticism — and this applies to the music as well as the choreography — is an absence of intrinsic logic and construction. To retain the interest of the audience this game of cat's cradle will have to be more concentrated. Its humour and caricature would profit immeasurably — as would the audience. In spite of the general disorder, some sections do hold a certain interest although in humour they are inferior to Petit's *Deuil en 24 heures*.

MORT DE NARCISSE

Theme and music by Claude Pothier. Décors and costumes by André Delfau. Choreography, Serge Golovine.

Narcisse SERGE GOLOVINE
His Reflection NINA VYROUBOVA
and *corps de ballet*

IN his second attempt at choreography Serge Golovine has remained faithful to his classical temperament and has been attracted by the theme and music of Claude Pothier.

"Who in fact are you, Narcissus? You reject the world which wants to draw you into its game. You reject likewise your



MORT DE NARCISSE : Serge Golovine, as Narcisse, surrounded by the corps de ballet in his own creation to theme and music of Claude Pothier. Photo : Lido.

image which troubles you. Those around you will only see your indifference, for which they will censure you, but in the end you will find the fulfilment of your destiny."

Unlike the themes of Prometheus, Orpheus and Paris, that of Narcissus, although very danceable, has been used very seldom. The work that Fokine created as a vehicle for Nijinsky and Karsavina was not a great success.

Nevertheless Golovine, in ignoring the present tendency towards the acrobatic and being interested only in pure gracefulness, has created an attractive and sincere work. Certainly the *enchainements* and *ensembles* sometimes suffer through relative clumsiness, due no doubt to inexperience, and the rhythms get lost now and then. However, he has been able, without providing an ostentatious rôle for himself, to create some original *variations* which he dances with perfect mastery.

The main interest of this ballet lies in two very lovely *pas de deux* for Narcissus and his image, which develop ingeniously into perfect symmetry. Nina Vyroubova, diaphanous and evanescent, gives to the reflection a very remarkable fluidity and a melancholy poetry. Apart from those for the principals, the choice of multi-coloured costumes was, on the whole, unfortunate.

Marie-Françoise Christout.

Continued from page 17

despite all the objections I have set out, it does not seem to me so hard to find a solution as it was, for instance, to get the first production on the stage at all.

Moreover, if this one primary difficulty could be overcome, and the club achieved some artistic stature, many of the obstacles which have beset it hitherto would be reduced. Ballet companies would become readier to find time for rehearsals, while designers could be encouraged to provide simple settings which would not be difficult to make, or consume much time on the day of performance. In addition to this, it would then be possible to implement the club's secondary object, which is to provide opportunities for established choreographers to experiment. The best solution to the problem would be to find one person with a high reputation in the ballet world, but acting in a freelance capacity, to undertake the job of Director of Productions. If no one person is available, it should be possible to find a group of two or three who would be prepared to share the work between them.

Whatever the objections to doing this, I am sure that they can be overcome once the need to do so has been clearly recognised.

In conclusion, I must emphasise that I am no longer a member of the club, and that what I have written represents only my personal viewpoint.

This month's front cover, by Douglas Elston, is of Alicia Markova, as the Spirit of the Lake, and Anton Dolin as St. George, in the Christmas play, *Where The Rainbow Ends*, at the New Victoria Theatre, London.

ALICIA MARKOVA received her first training at a local academy in Palmer's Green and her first public appearance was in the pantomime *Dick Whittington*, at the Kennington Theatre in South London. Later she studied with Seraphine Astafieva, in whose studio she was seen by Diaghilev, who later engaged her for his company. It was also in Astafieva's studio that she first met Anton Dolin. Rapidly Markova was moved from the *corps de ballet* to take over soloist rôles. After the Diaghilev Ballet disbanded on his death, she appeared in music halls and at Marie Rambert's Ballet Club. She later became the first ballerina of the newly-formed Vic-Wells Ballet and was mainly responsible for the early successes of this company which has now become the Royal Ballet. In 1935 she helped to form, with Anton Dolin, the Markova-Dolin Ballet, which was really the first company to bring the classics to the English provinces. When that disbanded in 1938, she joined Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Later she appeared with a number of companies and danced with Anton Dolin all over the world. Returning to England after the war, she and Dolin were responsible for forming London's Festival Ballet in 1950. Leaving that company about a year later, she has appeared as guest ballerina with all the world's great companies and also in concerts.

ANTON DOLIN was born in Sussex in 1904. He first studied with the Cone sisters in Brighton and later in London with Seraphine Astafieva. After appearing as a child actor and dancer in a number of theatrical productions he appeared with the Diaghilev Ballet in *The Sleeping Beauty* but was later engaged as a principal dancer in 1924, where he remained until 1925 and later returned in 1928. In the Diaghilev company he created a number of important rôles. After the company disbanded on Diaghilev's death, Dolin appeared in revues and musical halls and later helped to form the Camargo Society, for which organisation he created the famous rôle of Satan in Ninette de Valois' *Job*. He was also the first principal male dancer of the Vic-Wells Ballet, but later joined Markova in the formation of their Markova-Dolin company. When that disbanded he appeared with a number of notable companies. He helped to form London's Festival Ballet in 1950 and has remained with it as a dancer and Artistic Director ever since.

Ballet Dates

THE ROYAL BALLET I at the Royal Opera House,

December Covent Garden

- 15 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Gomes)
- 17 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Gomes)
- 20 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
- 23 *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Gomes)
- 26 *Cinderella* (Beriosova, Gomes)
- 27 (M) *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Gomes)
- 27 (E) *Cinderella* (Beriosova, Gomes)
- 29 *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Gomes)
- 31 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Gomes)

January

- 1 *Cinderella* (Linden, Blair)
- 3 *Cinderella* (Linden, Blair)
- 7 *Cinderella* (Beriosova, Gomes)
- 8 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair)

- 10 (M) *The Sleeping Beauty* (Linden, Blair)
 - 10 (E) *The Sleeping Beauty* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
 - 15 *Cinderella* (Nerina, Blair)
 - 17 (M) *Cinderella* (Beriosova, Gomes)
 - 17 (E) *Cinderella* (Nerina, Blair)
 - 20 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair)
 - 21 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
 - 23 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Linden, Blair)
 - 24 (M) *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Gomes)
 - 26 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Gomes)
 - 31 (M) *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Linden, Blair)
- February
- 3 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Gomes)
 - 6 *Coppélia* (Nerina, Blair)
 - 7 (M) *Coppélia* (Lane, Grant)
 - 7 (E) *The Lady and the Fool, La Fête Etrangère, Mam'zelle Angot*

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January

- 12 Odeon Theatre, Southend
- 19 Gaumont Theatre, Ipswich
- 26 The de Montfort Hall, Leicester

February

- 9 The Hippodrome, Brighton

BALLET RAMBERT

January

- 5 Wilmslow Theatre, Wilmslow
- 12 The Theatre Royal, York
- 19 Scottish Tour (1 week).
- 26 The Perth Repertory Theatre, Perth

February

- 2 Scottish Tour (2 more weeks)
- 16 The Little Theatre, Middlesbrough
- 23 Her Majesty's Theatre, Carlisle

March

- 2 The Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton
- 9 The New Theatre, Hull

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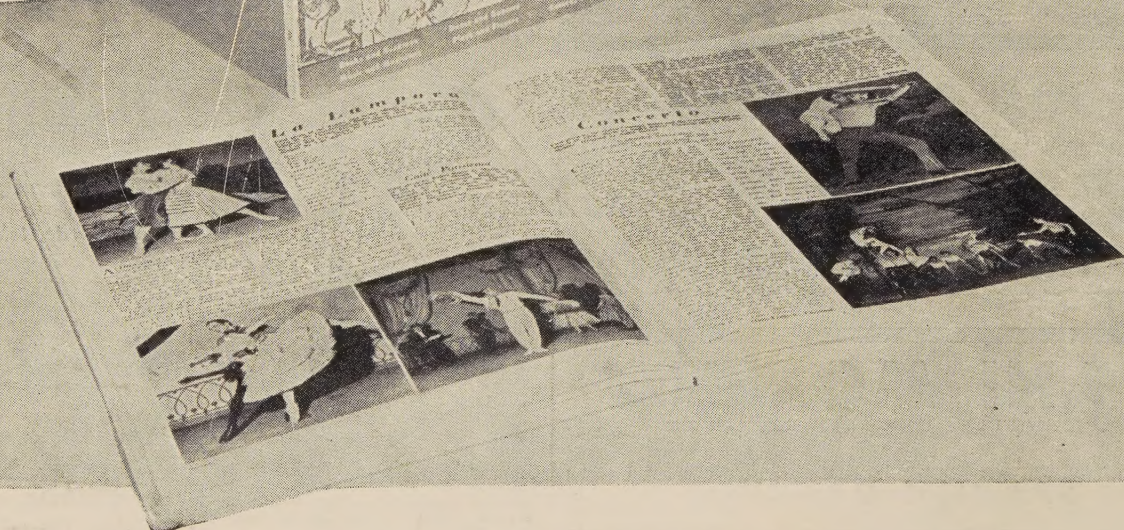
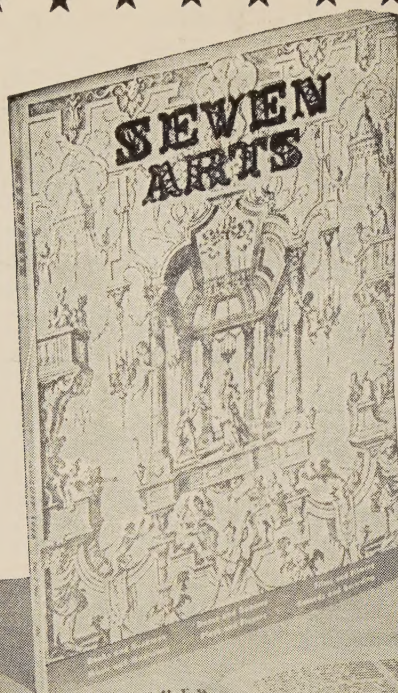
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